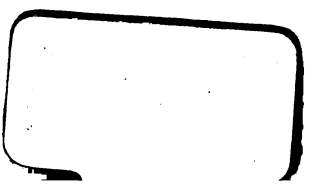


THE COSSACKS:

A TALE OF THE CAUCASUS IN 1852.

VOL. I.

THE COSSACKS:

A TALE OF THE CAUCASUS IN 1852.

BY

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY.

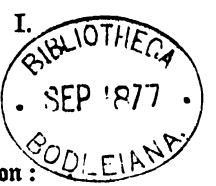
TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY

EUGENE SCHUYLER

(AUTHOR OF "TURKISTAN," ETC.)

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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PREFACE.

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY is now, perhaps, the most popular novelist in Russia, and, after Turguenief, he is incontestably the best. After desultory studies at home and in the University of Kazan, he entered the military service, and served in the Caucasus in 1851 and 1852. During the Crimean war he was stationed at Simpheropol, and Sebastopol, and there brought himself into general notice by some simple but affecting sketches of the famous siege, published in the "Russkii Viestnik" of Moscow. His sketches were read in the

palace; and word was sent from a high quarter that his life must be looked out for. After the war he published in rapid succession a number of sketches of military life, a charming semi-autobiographical tale called "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," and, finally, "The Cossacks."

For some years he ceased literary work, and devoted himself heart and soul to popular education, starting on his ancestral estate of *Yasnaya Polyana*, near Tula, a school for all the peasants of the neighbourhood, and publishing a small journal directed to the interests of primary education. He was led to this by reading Auerbach's charming story, "Ein Neues Leben." He also published a series of readers and elementary educational books, based on American models. In 1868 he published a long novel, "War and Peace," in which he interwove many scenes of the wars

against Napoleon, including the burning of Moscow. This book had immediately a great success. It is full of fine analysis of character and vivid portraiture, and contains many touching scenes, but has the fault of being too long, and of giving too much space and prominence to the author's special philosophical notions. After another interval of repose, Count Tolstoy published, between 1875 and 1877, "Anna Karenina," a novel of contemporary Russian life, the reputation and circulation of which are greater than even of "War and Peace."

Count Tolstoy seldom appears now in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but lives constantly on his estates, where he devotes himself to the education of his children, to planting birch-woods, and to his favourite pastime —the pursuit of game.

Turguenief told me once that he considered

"The Cossacks," of which a version is here offered to the public, the finest and most perfect production of Russian literature. The present translation was begun nearly ten years ago; but other studies and duties hindered its completion, until a long sea-voyage gave leisure which could be appropriated to no better object. May it contribute its little to the better knowledge and understanding, not only of the Russians, but of the most maligned and misunderstood portion of them —the Cossacks.

E. S.

New York,
July 9, 1878.

THE COSSACKS.

CHAPTER I.

All has become quiet in Moscow. At rare intervals the creak of wheels is heard along the snowy street. There are now no lights in the windows, and the street-lamps have been extinguished. The sound of bells comes from the churches, and, tinkling out over the sleeping city, reminds one of the morning. The streets are deserted.

Occasionally the sledge of a night *isvostchik*, with its narrow runners, sweeps over the mingled snow and sand to another corner,

where the driver goes to sleep again while waiting for another fare.

An old woman goes into a church, where, reflected in the gilded coverings of the holy pictures, the unsymmetrically-placed wax candles show an occasional red glare.

The work-people are already getting up after the long winter night, and are going to their labour.

But for gentlemen it is still evening.

In one of the windows of the *Restaurant Chevalier*, from between the closed shutters, contrary to the police regulations, there is a gleam of light. Carriages and sledges stand at the door, the drivers crowding together for warmth, and a three-horse posting-sledge is also waiting.

The porter, wrapping his sheep-skin coat tightly round him, is just visible at the corner of the house.

"Why do they bother themselves about trifles," thinks the lackey, who sits with sleepy face in the anteroom, "and always when I am on service?"

The voices of three young men at supper are heard in the neighbouring lighted room. They are about a table, on which are the remains of supper and some half-empty bottles of wine.

One—small, cleanly-built, slight, and ugly—sits and looks at one who is about to go away, with good-natured, sleepy eyes.

Another, a tall youth, reclines near a table covered with empty bottles, and twirls his watch-key.

The third, in a new sheep-skin coat, walks about the room, and, stopping from time to time, cracks an almond in his thick, strong fingers (all of which have long, clean, carefully-pared nails), and constantly smiles at

something. Both his eyes and his face are flushed.

He speaks with warmth and with gestures; but it is evident that he does not find words, and all the words which come to him seem insufficient to express all that he has at heart. Yet he continually smiles.

"Now I can tell all!" says Olenin,—the one in the sheep-skin coat. "I am not trying to defend myself; but still I'd like to have you at least understand me as I understand myself, and not look at this affair as a cowardly trick. You say that I am to blame in regard to her?" turning to Smirnof, who sits looking at him, with such good-natured eyes.

"Yes, you are to blame," answers Smirnof. And still greater affection and weariness seemed to be expressed in his look.

"I know why you say that," continued

Olenin. "To be loved, according to you, is just as much happiness as to love, and is sufficient for your whole life, if you only get it."

"Yes, quite sufficient, my dear fellow; more than is necessary," affirms Smirnof, opening and shutting his eyes.

"But why cannot I love, I myself?" replies Olenin. He stops to think, and looks sympathetically at his friend. "Why cannot I love? I cannot! No, to be loved is a misfortune,—a misfortune when you feel that you are to blame because you don't and can't give love in return. Oh, my conscience!" with an expressive gesture of his hand. "See, if all this had only happened in a rational way, and not the reverse! If it were only as we want it, and did not go on of itself! I, so to speak, stole that feeling; and you think so. Do not deny it: you must

think so. But believe me, of all the faults and follies that I have ever committed in my life, this is the only one that I don't repent of, and can't repent of. Neither in the beginning nor afterwards did I lie to myself or to her. It seemed to me that I had at last, somehow or other, fallen in love; but after all, I saw that this was an involuntary lie, that it was not possible to love in that way; and I could not go further, though she did. Was I to blame that I could not? What could I do?"

"Well, all is over now," said his friend, lighting a cigar to drive away sleep. "One thing only: you have never loved, and you do not know what it is to love."

Olenin again wished to say something, and racked his brains how to say it; but he could not express what he wanted.

"I have never loved! Yes, truly, I have

never loved. Still I have a wish to be in love, stronger than any wish I ever had. But, again, is there any such thing as love? Everything is somehow unfinished. Well, what is to be said? I have made a mess of my life; but all is over now. You are quite right; yet still I feel that a new life is about to begin."

"Which you will again make a mess of," said his tall friend, Golof, who was lying on the divan, and twirling his watch-key; but his remark was not heeded.

"I am both sad and happy to think that I am going away," he continued. "Why sad I do not know."

Olenin began to speak of himself alone, not noticing that this subject was not as interesting to others as to himself.

A man is never so egotistical as in a moment of great spiritual excitement. He seems to

think at this moment that there is nothing in the world finer and more interesting than himself.

"Dmitri Andreevitch, the driver, doesn't want to wait," said a young servant, wrapped up in a sheep-skin coat, and girt about with a scarf. "The horses have been waiting since twelve o'clock, and it is now four."

Olenin looked at his Vanusha. In his knotted scarf, in his felt boots, and in his sleepy countenance, he heard the voice of another life calling him,—a life of toil, of privation, and of activity.

"In fact, I must go. Goodbye," he said, feeling down his sheep-skin coat, to see if it were all properly hooked.

Disregarding the advice to give a little more *vódka* to the driver, he put on his hat, and stood in the middle of the room. Then

they all kissed each other, once, twice, stopped a minute, and then embraced a third time.

Olenin went up to the table, drank a glass of champagne which was standing there, clasped the hand of little ugly Smirnof, and blushed.

"No! Nevertheless I will say it. . . . I must be frank with you, because I love you. . . . You love her? I always thought so. . . . Yes?"

"Yes," answered his friend, smiling still more kindly.

"And perhaps—"

"I beg your pardon, sirs; but I am ordered to put out the candles," said the sleepy lackey, wondering why the gentlemen were always talking one and the same thing. "Whose account shall I put it down to? To yours?" he added, turning to the tall

young man, though he knew in advance whom to address.

"To mine," said Golof. "How much?"

"Twenty-six roubles."

Golof thought a moment, but said nothing, and put the bill in his pocket.

But the two who were talking went on. "Good-bye, you excellent, good fellow," said the little, ugly, tender-eyed Smirnof.

Tears welled up into the eyes of both. They went out into the porch.

"Ah, yes!" said Olenin, approaching, and turning to Golof. "You settle *Chevalier's* account, and then write me how much it is."

"Well, all right," said Golof, putting on his gloves. "How I envy you!" he added quite unexpectedly, when they had got outside.

Olenin got into the posting-sledge, wrapped

himself up in his fur coat, said, "Well, come on," and then moved on in the sledge, so as to give a place to Golof. His voice trembled.

His friend, however, said, "Good-bye, Mitya! God give you—"

He wished nothing more than that his friend should go away as quickly as possible, and therefore he did not finish what he wished him.

They were silent. Once again somebody said, "Good-bye!" somebody said, "Go on!" and the driver touched up his horses.

"Elizar! here!" cried one of the others. The *isvostchiks* and the coachman began to move, clicked to their horses, and slapped them with the reins. The frozen carriage creaked over the snow.

"Nice little fellow, that Olenin," said Golof. "But what a whim to go to the

Caucasus as a *yunker!* I would not do it for half a rouble. Are you going to dine at the club to-morrow?"

"Yes."

And they separated.

Olenin felt warm and comfortable in his fur coat. He sat on the bottom of the sledge, opened his coat for a little air; and the shaggy post-horses, covered with drops of frozen breath, galloped from one dark street into another, past the scarcely visible houses.

It seemed to Olenin that only people who were going away went through these streets. Around everything was dark, still, and lonely; and his soul was so full of recollections, of love, of sympathy, and of friendly tears!

CHAPTER II.

"I AM in love! I am very much in love! Excellent fellows! All right!" he exclaimed, and felt like crying.

Why should he feel like crying? Who were excellent fellows? With whom was he very much in love? He did not very much know himself.

Sometimes he would look at a house, and wonder why it was so strangely built; sometimes he wondered why the driver and Vanusha, who were so strange to him, were so near him, and, together with him, trembled and shook about from the galloping of the

side horses, which tugged at the frozen traces; and again he said, "Excellent fellows! I am in love!"

Once again he said, "How seize it? Splendid!" Then he wonderingly asked himself, "Am I not drunk?"

It is true he had drunk for his share two bottles of wine; but not the wine alone had affected him. He recalled all the seemingly earnest words of friendship which had been shamefacedly, and, as it were, unexpectedly said before his departure. He recalled the clasp of the hands, the looks, the salutations, and the sound of the voice of Golof, when he said, "Good-bye, Mitya!" after he had already taken his seat in the sledge. He recalled his own resolute frankness. All this had for him a touching meaning.

Before his departure, not only friends and relatives, not only people who were

indifferent to him, but even those who were perfectly unsympathetic with him, those who wished him ill, all began suddenly to love him more than ever, and to pardon him everything, as if before confession or before death.

"Perhaps I shall never come back from the Caucasus," he thought; and it seemed to him that he loved his friends and loved some one else besides.

He was sorry for himself; but it was not love for his friends that had so softened and excited his spirit that he could not keep in the senseless words which seemed to utter themselves in spite of him; and it was not love for women (he had never yet loved) that had brought him to this condition.

It was love for himself, warm, full of hope, young love, faithful love for everything that was good in his soul (and it seemed to him

now as if there were nothing but good there), which caused him to weep, and to stammer disjointed words.

Olenin was a young man who had never finished a university course anywhere; who had never even been in service, though he had been merely registered for a while in some government office; who had squandered half of his fortune; and who, although twenty-four years old, had never chosen for himself any career, and had never done anything at all. He was what was called in Moscow society "a young man."

At eighteen years old Olenin was as free as only rich young Russians who had been left without parents from boyhood could be, thirty years ago. For him there were neither physical nor moral shackles. He could do everything. Nothing was necessary to him: nothing restrained him. He had neither

family nor country, nor faith nor wants. He believed in nothing, and admitted nothing. But, though admitting nothing, he was not only not a sad, bored, and argumentative youth, but, on the contrary, constantly amused himself.

He had decided that there was no such thing as love; and yet the presence of a young and pretty woman always gave him a sort of shiver.

He had known for a long time that honours and titles were all folly; but he felt an involuntary satisfaction, if, at a ball, Prince Serge walked up to him, and made some complimentary remarks. But he only gave himself up to all his amusements in so far as they never bound him to anything.

When, after yielding to a desire, he began to feel the approach of work, or of a struggle, —even a very slight struggle with life,—he

instinctively tried to tear himself away from this feeling or affair, and to regain his freedom.

Thus he began "society" life, service, agriculture, music (to which at one time he had thought of dedicating himself), and even love, in which he did not believe.

He frequently reflected where to put all that strength of youth which is given to a man only once in life,—in art, in science, in love, or in practical activity,—not strength of the intellect, of the heart, or of the imagination, but that never-recurring *élan*, that force which is given once to every man, of making of himself all that he desires, and whatever he wishes, of getting from the world whatever he wants.

There are people devoid of this impulse, who, when they once enter upon real life, put upon themselves the first yoke they find, and

honourably work in it to the end of their life.

But Olenin too strongly admitted in himself the presence of this god of youth, this capability of transforming himself according to one wish, according to one idea; this capability of wishing and doing; this capability of throwing himself into a bottomless abyss, not knowing why, not knowing wherefore. He had in himself this feeling, was proud of it, and, without knowing it, was happy in it.

Up to this time he had loved himself alone; and he could not help loving himself, because he expected from himself nothing but good, and had never yet succeeded in disenchanting himself.

On going away from Moscow he found himself in that happy, youthful state of mind, when, acknowledging his previous errors, a

young man suddenly says to himself, that all that was not the thing; that all his past was accidental, and signified nothing; that, before that, he had had no desire to live *well*, but that in future, on going away from Moscow, he would begin a new life, in which there would be no more of these mistakes, no more remorse, and, of course, nothing but happiness.

As always happens on a long journey, during the first two or three stations the imagination remains in the place which you leave, and then suddenly, on the first morning you meet on the road, your thoughts are carried on to the end of your journey, and there begin to build castles in the air.

So was it with Olenin. When he got beyond the town, and began to look at the snowy fields, he felt glad that he was alone in

the midst of these fields, wrapped himself up in his furs, sank down to the bottom of his sledge, grew quiet, and gradually fell into a doze.

The farewell with his friends had touched him, and he began to think of the whole of his past winter in Moscow; and pictures of the past, interrupted with confused thoughts and reproaches, began, unasked, to rise before his imagination.

He recalled his friends who had seen him off, and his relations with the girl of whom they had spoken.

That girl was rich. "How could Smirnof love her when he knew that she loved me!" he thought; and mean suspicions came into his head.

"There is great lack of honour in people, as you may think. And really, why did not I fall in love?" he asked himself. "Every-

body tells me that I have never been in love. Am I really a moral monster?"

Then he began to remember the times he had thought himself in love. He recalled the first period of his life in society, and the sister of one of his friends, with whom he had passed evenings, sitting at the table while the lamp lighted up her taper fingers over her work, and the lower part of her pretty, graceful face; and he recalled those conversations, which so dragged on like games, his general awkwardness and bashfulness, and his constant feeling of anger at being so *gauche*.

A kind of voice always said to him, "That is not right; that is not right:" and somehow it always came out not right.

After that he recalled a ball and mazurka with the pretty D——. "How much I was in love that night! how happy I was! How

sad and wretched I was when I awoke the next morning, and felt that I was free!

"Why does Love not come to me, and bind me hand and foot?" he thought. "There is no such thing as love! The lady who was our country neighbour, and who used to say the same thing to me, and to Dubrovin, and to the marshal of the nobility, that she was in love with the stars, was also *not the one.*"

And then he began to remember his activity in the country as a landowner; and again his reflections gave him no pleasure.

"Will they talk long about my departure?" came into his head. But who *they* were he did not know. And immediately afterwards an idea came to him which caused him to frown, and to pronounce indistinct sounds: that was a recollection of Mr. Capel and the six hundred and seventy-eight roubles which

he owed the tailor; and he remembered the words with which he had asked him to wait a year more, and the expression of discontent which was visible on his face.

"Oh my conscience!" he repeated, frowning, and trying to drive away the unendurable thought. "Nevertheless, she loved me, notwithstanding it," he thought about the girl on whom the conversation had run.

"Yes, if I were married to her, things would be different, and I should not now be owing Vasilief."

And there came up to him the last evening of card-playing with Mr. Vasilief at the club, to which he had gone straight from her; and he remembered his request to play longer, and Vasilief's cold refusal.

"A year of economy, and everything will be paid; and then the deuce take them all!"

But, in spite of this feeling of assurance, he again began to count up the debts he had, their terms, and when he proposed to pay them. "Yes, then I still owe Morel, besides Chevalier;" and there came up to him the whole night in which he had got so greatly in debt. It was a drinking-party with the gipsies, which some young fellows coming from St. Petersburg had got up.

"Sashka Borch, an aide-de-camp of the emperor, and Prince Dolbenki, and that important old fellow—why were they so contented with themselves?" thought he; "and why did they form a special circle, which, in their opinion, everybody else ought to feel much flattered to enter? Because they were aides-de-camp of the emperor?

"It is awful how they considered everybody else so stupid and snobbish. I showed them the contrary, because I never wished to get

intimate with them. Nevertheless, I think that Andrei the steward was very much astonished to find me at thee and thou with such a man as Sashka Borch, a colonel, and an aide-de-camp of the emperor. Yes; and nobody drank more than I did that evening. I even taught the gipsies a new song, and they all listened to me. Well, I have done very many foolish things, but still I am a very, very fine young fellow," he thought.

The morning found Olenin at the third station. He drank his tea, helped Vanusha to change the packages and trunks, and sat between them with great propriety, straight and accurately, knowing where everything was, and how to find it,—where his money was, and how much he had; where his passport, his road-pass, and the *chaussée* receipt were: and it all seemed to be arranged in such a practical manner, that he began to

get merry, and the long journey appeared to him in the light of a continued promenade.

During the morning and afternoon he sat deep in arithmetical calculations as to how many miles he had gone, how far it was to the first station, how far after to the first town, to dinner, to tea, and to Stavropol, and what proportion of the whole road he had already gone over.

Then he began to calculate how much money he had, how much was necessary to pay all his debts, and what part of his whole income he would spend in the meanwhile.

At evening, when he drank his tea, he calculated that to Stavropol there remained only seven-elevenths of the whole road, that his debts could be paid by seven months of economy, and that they amounted to only one-eighth of his whole property; and then, growing quiet, he wrapped himself up, sank

down in his sledge, and again began to doze.

His imagination now was all in the future, in the Caucasus. All his dreams of the future were united with images of Amalat Beks, Circassian girls, mountains, precipices, fearful torrents, and dangers.

Everything came up to his fancy confused, and not clear; but fame which attracted, and death which threatened, constituted the interest of this future. Sometimes, with unaccustomed bravery, and with strength which astonished everybody, he killed and defeated an innumerable throng of mountaineers: sometimes he was himself a mountaineer, and with them rose for independence against the Russians.

As soon as details came up to his mind, his old Moscow acquaintances were always actors in them. Sashka Borch always made

war against him, either with the Russians or the mountaineers. Even, he did not quite know how, the tailor Mr. Capel took an active part in the triumph of the victor.

If, at that time, he remembered any of his old weaknesses, their remembrance was rather pleasant than otherwise. It was clear, that there among the mountains, the torrents, the Circassian girls, and the dangers, these mistakes could not be repeated. He had already once confessed them to himself, and that was the end of it.

Yet there was one dream, a very dear dream, which mingled with every thought of the young man about his future,—the dream of a woman. Among the mountains there came up to his imagination a vision of a Circassian slave-girl, with slender waist, long braids, and submissive blue eyes.

He imagined in the mountains a lonely

cabin, and on its threshold he saw *her* watching for him, as he returned tired and covered with dust, blood, and fame; and he gloated over her kisses, her shoulders, her sweet voice, and especially her submissiveness.

She was charming; but still she was uneducated, wild, and rude. In the long winter evenings he would begin to educate her. She was sensible, full of understanding, and gifted, and quickly gained all necessary knowledge. Why not? She could very easily learn languages, read and understand the productions of French literature. "Notre Dame de Paris," for example, certainly would please her. She would even talk French. In the drawing-room she would have more native dignity than many a lady in the highest society. She would sing simply, but with feeling and passion. "That is all bosh," he said to himself.

And then they came to another station; and it was necessary to change sledges, and give a *pour-boire* to the driver. But he seeks again in his fancy for the *bosh* he had just been thinking; and again rise to his vision the Circassian girl, fame, return to Russia, becoming an aide-de-camp of the emperor, and a charming wife.

"But then there is no such thing as love," he said to himself. "Titles—all nonsense! But six hundred and seventy-eight roubles? But then the subjected territory would give me far more wealth than I could spend in my life. However one should not enjoy so much wealth alone. I ought to divide it. But with whom? Six hundred and seventy-eight roubles. Mr. Capel, and then it is quite evident—"

And already very confused things began to enter his thoughts; and only the voice of

Vanusha, and the feeling that he had stopped, disturbed the healthy youthful dream; and, without knowing how, he had changed to another sledge at the new station, and went on farther.

Next morning it was just the same,—the same stations, the same tea, the same cruppers of the horses moving up and down before him, the same short conversations with Vanusha, the same confused visions and dreams in the evening, and a tired, healthy youthful sleep during the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE farther Olenin got from the centre of Russia, the farther all his recollections seemed from him; and the nearer he came to the Caucasus, the more comforted he became at heart. To go away altogether, and never to return, nor to show himself in society, came sometimes into his head.

"The people that I shall see here are *not people*. None of them know me; and none of them can ever be in Moscow, in that society in which I live, and learn about my past. No one from Moscow society will ever

find out what I did when I lived among these people."

Thus quite a new feeling for him of freedom from his whole past took hold of him among these rude beings whom he met on the road, and whom he did not admit to be people on a level with his Moscow acquaintances. The ruder the people, the fewer the signs of civilization, the freer he felt himself.

Stavropol, through which he was obliged to pass, made him angry. The signs, even French signs, the ladies in open carriages, the cabs standing in the open street, the boulevard, and a gentleman in an overcoat and a hat, walking along the boulevard, and staring at those who passed him, affected him disagreeably.

"Perhaps some of those people know some of my acquaintances;" and he again re-

membered the club, the tailor, cards, and society.

Beyond Stavropol, however, all went on satisfactorily: it was wild, and, more than that, beautiful and warlike.

Olenin kept feeling gayer and gayer. All the Cossacks, drivers, and station-inspectors, seemed to him simple beings, with whom he could jest and talk without any effort, without thinking to what class of society they belonged. All belonged to the human race, which had all become unconsciously dear to Olenin; and all were very amiable with him.

While still in the land of the Don Cossacks, he had changed his sledge for a cart; and at Stavropol it had become so warm, that he rode without his furs. It was already spring—an unexpected, joyous spring for Olenin.

At night they no longer let him go out of

the station, and even in the evening said it was dangerous. Vanusha had begun to grow cowardly; and a loaded rifle lay at his side.

Olenin got still gayer. At one station the inspector told a story of how, not long before, there had been a fearful murder on the road. He began to meet men who were well armed.

"It is already beginning," thought Olenin to himself; and he constantly expected a sight of the snowy mountains about which he had been told so much.

Once, towards evening, the Tartar driver pointed with his whip to the mountains, barely visible behind the clouds.

Olenin eagerly began to look; but it was twilight, and the clouds half concealed the mountains. He could only see something grayish, whitish, and wavy; and, much as he

tried, he could find nothing beautiful in the sight of the mountains, about which he had heard and read so much.

He began to think that mountains and clouds looked very much alike, and that the especial beauty of snowy mountains, of which people had told him so much, was a mere fancy, like the music of Bach, or love, in which he did not believe: and he ceased expecting anything of the mountains. But on the next day, early in the morning, he woke up in his cart from the coolness of the air, and indifferently looked to his right.

The morning was beautifully clear. Suddenly he saw twenty paces from him, as seemed to him at the first moment, the pure white masses, with their tender outlines, and the fantastic, distinct aerial line of their tops, and the sky beyond.

When he began to comprehend the distance between him and the mountains, and between the mountains and the sky, and the vastness of the mountains, and when he began to feel all the infinitude of their beauty, he began to fear lest it was a mirage or a dream. He shook himself to wake up. But the mountains were still there.

"What is that? what is that?" he asked the driver.

"The mountains," answered the Tartar, with indifference.

"I have looked at them a long time," said Vanusha. "That is nice. They would not believe it at home."

With the quick movement of the cart, the mountains appeared always to run along the horizon, gleaming in the rays of the rising sun with their rosy tops.

At first the mountains only astonished

Olenin, afterwards they delighted him; but later, on looking more and more at this growing and receding chain of snowy mountains, not from other black mountains, but straight from the middle of the steppe, he little by little began to realize their beauty, and he *felt* the mountains.

From this moment whatever he saw, whatever he thought of, whatever he felt, received for him the new and strikingly majestic character of the mountains. All his Moscow recollections, his shame and his regrets, all his trivial dreams of the Caucasus, departed, and never returned again.

"Now it is begun!" a sort of triumphant voice said to him. The road, the line of the Terek, now visible in the distance, the stations, and the people, no longer seemed to him as a mockery.

He looked at the sky, and remembered the

mountains. He looked at himself, at Vanusha, and again thought of the mountains.

"There go two Cossacks on horseback, with their guns slung over their shoulders, and evenly swinging on their backs, and their horses regularly changing their grey-and-white legs; but the mountains! . . . Beyond the Terek there is visible the smoke in a village; but the mountains! . . . The sun rises, and is reflected in the Terek, visible among the reeds; but the mountains! . . . A cart goes out from the station, pretty women, young women, are in it; but the mountains! . . The Abreks are trotting over the steppe, and I am going on, and I am not afraid of them. I have a gun, and force, and youth—and the mountains!"

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY part of the line of the Terek, along which are placed the Cossack stations, about sixty miles in all, has its special character, both of locality and of population. The Terek, which separates the Cossacks from the Circassian mountaineers, flows turbidly and rapidly along, and is already broad and wide, and constantly washes the greyish sand to the low right bank, which is all overgrown with reeds, and undermines the steep though not high left bank with its roots of century-old oaks, its rotting plane-trees, and its young undergrowth.

On the right bank are scattered peaceful but still unquiet villages. Along the left bank, about half a mile from the water, and at a distance of four or five miles from each other, are placed the stations.

In old times the most of these stations were on the very bank; but the Terek, which moves northward from the mountains, has washed them away; and now there are dimly visible thickly overgrown gardens, orchards, pear-trees, lindens, and poplars, woven together with brambles and wild vines.

No one lives there now; and on the sand are only to be seen the tracks of the stags, the wolves, the hares, and the pheasants, that love this spot.

From station to station there goes a road cut straight through the forest. Along the road are placed the outposts, in which the Cossacks are stationed; between the outposts, on slight

elevations, there are look-outs. Only a narrow belt of woody, fertile land, about half a mile wide,constitutes the property of the Cossacks.

North of them begin the sandy hillocks of the Nogai and Mozdok Steppes, which go straight on northward, and melt, God knows where, into the Turkoman, Astrakhan, and Kirghiz Steppes.

Southward of the Terek are the Great Tchetchna, the Kotchkalosofsky Range, the Black Mountains, and still another range, and, farther on, the snowy mountains, which are visible indeed, but where no Cossack has ever been. In this belt, so fertile, so woody, and so richly overgrown with vegetation, there has lived from time immemorial a warlike, handsome, and rich Russian population of old believers, called the Grebna Cossacks.

Long, long ago, their ancestors, old be-

lievers, ran away from Russia, and settled beyond the Terek, among the Tchetchna Circassians, on the Grebna, the first range of the woody mountains of the Great Tchetchna.

Living among the Circassians, the Cossacks intermarried with them, and adopted the customs, the manners, and the morals of the mountaineers, and yet kept, in all their pristine purity, their Russian language and their old faith.

A tradition, which is still fresh among the Cossacks, says that the Tsar Ivan the Terrible came to the Terek, called to himself the old men from the Grebna, gave them land on the Russian side of the river, covenanted to live with them in friendship, and promised never to compel them to subjection, or to change of faith.

Even now the Cossack tribes consider themselves related to the Circassians; and

love for freedom, idleness, robbery, and war constitute the chief traits of their character.

The influence of Russia is seen only on the unprofitable side, by limiting their elections, by taking away their bells, and by the troops which pass and are stationed there.

The Cossack, by inclination, hates the roving mountaineer who has killed his brother, less than the soldier who is stationed to protect his village, but who has smoked up his cottage with tobacco. He respects his foe the mountaineer, but despises the soldier as a foreigner and an oppressor.

Even the Russian peasant is for the Cossack a strange, wild, and despicable being, a specimen of whom he has seen in the travelling merchants and Little Russian colonists, whom the Cossack, in contempt, calls "hat-wearers."

Elegance in dress consists in imitation of a

Circassian. His best arms are those got from the mountaineers; his best horses are bought or stolen from them. The young Cossack is proud of knowing the Tartar language; and when he is on a holiday, he will even talk with his fellow in Tartar.

Nevertheless, this little Christian population, placed upon a corner of land surrounded by half-wild Mohammedan tribes and by soldiers, considers itself in the highest degree of development, and considers as a man no one but a Cossack: on everybody else it looks with a sort of contempt.

The Cossack passes the greater part of his time in the outposts, in expeditions, in hunting, or in fishing. He very seldom works at home. His presence at the station is an exception to the rule, and then he carouses.

All the Cossacks have their own wine; and drunkenness is not so much an inclina-

tion common to all as it is a rite, the non-fulfilment of which would be considered a heresy.

The Cossack looks on women as the tools of his prosperity (a girl only has the right to amuse herself): he makes his wife work for him from youth to old age, and looks on woman with the Eastern demand of obedience and labour.

In consequence of this view, the women,—who are strongly developed both physically and morally,—although externally obedient, have everywhere in the East incomparably more influence and weight in home-life than in the West. Their separation from social life, and their habit of heavy, manly labour, give them more weight and force in home affairs.

The Cossack, who, before outsiders considers it unbecoming to speak affectionately

or unnecessarily with his wife, always feels her superiority when left face to face with her. His whole house, his whole property, his whole fortune, have been got by her means, and are kept up only by her labour and efforts.

Although he is firmly assured that labour is shameful for a Cossack, and is suitable only for a Tartar workman or for a woman, he feels, in a confused way, that all that he enjoys, and calls his own, is the product of that labour, and that it is in the power of the woman—his mother or his wife, whom he considers his slave—to deprive him of all that he enjoys.

Besides this, the constant masculine, heavy work and labour put upon her have given an especially independent and masculine character to the Cossack woman, and have developed in her in an astonishing way, physi-

cal force, sound sense, decision, and firmness of character.

The women, for the most part, are stronger more sensible, more developed, and finer looking than the men. The beauty of the Grebna Cossack woman is especially striking by the union of the purest type of the Circassian face with the broad and powerful frame of the Northern woman.

The Cossack women wear the Circassian dress,—Tartar shirt, gown, and drawers; but they tie up their heads in kerchiefs, in the Russian style. Elegance, neatness, and beauty in their attire, and in the arrangement of their cottages, form a habit and a necessity of their life. In their relations to the men, women, and especially girls, enjoy complete freedom.

The station of Novomlinsk was considered to be the centre of the Grebna Cossacks.

Here, more than in the rest, were preserved the manners of the old Cossacks; and the women of this station have from of old been famous for their beauty throughout the whole Caucásus.

The means of livelihood of the Cossacks consist in vineyards, orchards, melon and pumpkin plantations, in fishing and hunting, raising maize and millet, and in booty gained in war.

The station of Novomlinsk is two miles from the Terek, though separated from it by a thick forest. On one side of the road passing through the station is the river: on the other are vineyards, orchards, and the sandy dunes of the Nogai Steppe. The station is surrounded by a wall of earth and a hedge of brambles.

Everybody coming to the station or going out of it passes through gates hung on high

posts, covered with a little roof thatched with reeds, near which, on a wooden carriage, is an abortive gun (which has not been fired for a hundred years), which was, at some time or other, captured by the Cossacks.

A Cossack, in a uniform fur coat, with sabre and gun, sometimes stands, and sometimes does not stand, on guard at the gate; sometimes he salutes, sometimes he does not salute, a passing officer.

Under the reed-thatched gate, on a small board, is painted in black characters, "Houses 266, souls of the male sex 897, ditto of the female sex 1012."

The houses of the Cossacks are all raised upon posts two or three feet above the ground, and are nicely thatched with reeds, with steep gables. Although they are not all new, all are in good repair and clean, with high porches of different styles. They are

not set close to each other, but are picturesquely placed along the broad streets, with plenty of room between.

In front of the large windows of many houses are to be seen dark-green balsam poplars, tender light-green acacias, with their white, fragrant blossoms, as well as insolently brilliant yellow sunflowers, and luxuriant beds of vegetables and vines.

On the broad square are three shops, stocked with cotton goods, seeds, green beans, and gingerbread; and beyond a tall fence, behind a row of old poplars, is seen, longer and higher than the others, the house of the regimental commander, with double windows.

On weekdays, especially in summer, there are very few people to be seen walking in the streets of the station.

The Cossacks are on service,—at the outposts, or on expeditions. Old men are

hunting or fishing, or, together with their wives, are working in the vineyards and gardens. Only the old, the very young, or the sick, remain at home.

CHAPTER V.

It was one of those peculiar evenings, such as are found only in the Caucasus. The sun had gone down behind the mountains; but it was still light. The last rays lighted up a third of the sky; and in their light the whitish mass of the mountains stood out very distinctly. The air was thin, immovable, and resonant. A long shadow stretched out for miles from the mountains over the steppe. In the steppe, beyond the river, along the roads, everywhere, it was deserted.

Even if occasionally horsemen were seen somewhere, the Cossacks at the outpost and

the Circassians in their village looked at the riders with astonishment and curiosity, and tried to guess who those ill-fated people could be.

As was the evening, so were the people; and every one seemed to fear one another, and went along close to the houses: only the animals and birds who did not fear man freely traversed this waste.

Cossack girls, braiding together their whips, hasten from the gardens with merry conversation before the setting of the sun.

The gardens are soon left deserted, as are all the surroundings; but the station at this time of the evening becomes specially alive. From every side people come to it on foot, on horseback, and in creaking carts.

Girls in tucked-up shirts, with switches in their hands, merrily chattering, run to the gates to meet the cattle, which are

hastening on in a cloud of dust and gnats brought by them from the steppe. The sated cows and buffaloes wander along the streets; and the Cossack children, in coloured shirts, run after them.

We can hear loud conversation, merry laughter and cries, interrupted by the lowing of the cattle. There an armed Cossack on horseback, who has got leave to come back from the outpost, goes up to a cottage, and, leaning down to the window, knocks at it, immediately after which one can see the pretty young head of a Cossack girl, and can hear her smiling and affectionate talk.

There is a high-cheeked Tartar workman coming back with reeds from the steppe. He turns his creaking cart into the clean broad courtyard of the captain, and throws off the yoke from the sweating heads of the oxen, and talks in Tartar with the master.

By the side of the pool, which occupies nearly the whole street, and past which so many people have gone crowding with difficulty along the side of the fences, steps a bare-footed Cossack girl, with a bundle of wood on her back, lifting her petticoat high above her white foot, while a Cossack horseman who has just returned, laughingly cries, "Lift it higher, wench," and stares at her.

The Cossack girl drops her petticoat, throws down her wood, and runs away.

An old Cossack, with rolled-up trousers and bare breast, returning from fishing, carries across his shoulder in a net the still panting silvery herrings; and, in order to go by a nearer way, crawls through the broken fence of a neighbour, and tears a rent in his shirt, which catches on the twigs.

There an old woman drags after her a dry

branch ; and the blows of a hatchet are heard from around the corner. Cossack children shout as they whip their tops in the streets everywhere where there is a bit of level ground. Women crawl through the fences, so as not to go round about. The pungent smell of burning dung rises from all the chimneys. In every yard there is heard the increased bustle which precedes the stillness of night.

Old Mother Ulitka, the wife of the cornet and schoolmaster, has, like the other women, come to the gate of her yard, and watches for the cattle who are being driven along the street by her daughter Marianka.

She has not yet succeeded in opening the wicket-gate, when an immense buffalo cow, surrounded by gnats, and lowing, breaks its way through, after which slowly come the sated cows, recognizing their mistress with

their grey eyes, and measuredly beating their sides with their tails.

The shapely beauty Marianka comes to the gate, and throwing away her switch opens the wicket-gate, and with her petulant feet tries to separate and drive in the cattle.

"Take off your shoes, you wicked child!" cries her mother. "Your shoes are getting all spoiled."

Marianka does not feel in the least insulted by the appellation of "wicked child!" but takes these words as an endearing epithet, and merely keeps on with her business. The face of Marianka is half concealed by the kerchief tied around her head: she wears a pink shirt and a green petticoat. She conceals herself under the thatched gate of the yard, behind the fat back of a cow; and you can only hear through the fence her voice tenderly

talking to the buffalo cow: "Now stand!" "Oh, you!" "Come now, little mother!" . . . .

Soon after, the girl and the old woman come out to the milk-house, each carrying two great pails of milk, the produce of the day. From the great chimney of the milk-house the smoke of burning dung soon rises; for the milk is being made into curds.

The girl lights the fire; and the old woman goes to the gate-way. Twilight has now enveloped the village. Everywhere in the air you perceive the smell of vegetables, of cattle, and of pungent smoke.

In the gates, and along the streets, Cossack girls are everywhere running, bearing in their hands lighted rags.

In the yards are heard the heavy breathing and quiet rumination of the cattle, who are now at rest; and women's and children's

voices only call to one another in the yards, and through the streets.

On a weekday it is rare to hear the drunken voice of a man.

An old, tall, and masculine-looking Cossack woman comes from the opposite yard to Mother Ulitka, and asks for fire, carrying a rag in her hands.

"Well, mother, have you done everything?" she asks.

"The girl is heating the milk-house. Oh! you want a light, do you?" says Mother Ulitka. "Proud to be of service to you."

Both the women go into the cottage. Coarse hands, unaccustomed to small objects, tremblingly take off the cover from the precious match-box, which is a rarity with the Cossacks.

The masculine-looking Cossack woman who has just come in sits down on the

threshold, with the evident intention of gossiping.

"So your husband, then, is in the school?" she asks.

"Nothing but teaching the children, mother. He wrote he will be here for the holidays," replies the cornet's wife.

"It is plain he is a sensible man. Well, it is all for somebody's good."

"Of course it is for somebody's good."

"My Lukasha is at the outposts, and they do not allow him to come home," answers the visitor, without regard to the fact that the cornet's wife knew this long ago.

She feels the necessity of speaking about her son, who had only just entered on service and whom she wished to marry to Marianka, the cornet's daughter.

"So he is at the outposts?"

"Yes, mother. He has not been home

since the last holidays. Only a day or two ago, I sent him some shirts by Thomas. Well, there is nothing to be said, since the authorities order it. In fact, they say they are looking for the Circassians again. Lukasha, he says, is all right. He is very merry over it."

"God be praised!" says the cornet's wife: "in a word, *Urvan*."

Lukasha was called *Urvan* for the bravery with which he pulled a Cossack girl out of the water.

The cornet's wife remembered this in order to say something pleasant and complimentary to his mother.

"Thank God, mother, he is a good son, a brave young fellow! Everybody speaks well of him," says Lukasha's mother. "Only I should like to marry him, and then I could die contented."

"Well, are there so few girls in the station?" answered the careful cornet's wife, trying with her warty hands to put back the cover of the match-box.

"Many, many," remarks Lukasha's mother and nods her head. "But your girl, Marianusha: that is the girl! You would have to look through the whole regiment for one like her."

The cornet's wife knows the intention of Lukasha's mother; and, although Lukasha seems to her like a very good young Cossack, yet she does not care to continue the conversation: first, because she is the cornet's wife and rich, and Lukasha is the son of a simple Cossack and an orphan; and, in the second place, because she does not want to part too quickly with her daughter, but chiefly because propriety demands this.

"Well, what of that? Marianka will grow

up, and she will be a wife like the rest of them," she says moderately and modestly.

"Oh! I will send the match-makers, I will send them after we get ready the garden; and we will come to make our compliments to your worship. We will come to make our compliments to Ilya Vasilievitch."

"What has Ilya got to do with it?" says the cornet's wife proudly. "They'll have to talk with me. But everything in its time."

Lukasha's mother sees in the stern face of the cornet's wife that there is no use in saying anything more; so she lights her rag with a match, and, getting up, says, "Do not forget mother: remember these words.—Well I must go home. It is time to heat up," she adds.

Passing through the street, and waving in her outstretched hand the lighted rag, she meets Marianka, who bows to her.

"Queen-girl, working-girl," she thinks, looking at the beauty. "Grow up, indeed! Quite time to get married already. Yes, and in a good house too: she had better marry Lukasha."

Mother Ulitka had her own thoughts, and as she sat on her own threshold so she remained, and pondered something deeply, until her daughter called her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE male population of the station lives in campaigns and on the outposts. That very Lukashka,[1] about whom the old women in the station were talking at even, stood on the look-out at the post of Lower Prototsk, on the very bank of the Terek.

Leaning his elbows on the balustrade of the look-out, and winking his eyes, he kept looking, now into the distance beyond the Terek, and then near by at his comrades, and sometimes talked a little with them.

[1] Lukasha and Lukashka are varying diminutives for Luka, just as Mariana, Marianka, and Marianushka are for Marya.

The sun was already drawing near to the snowy range, which stood out white above the fleecy clouds. The clouds which float along the flanks of the mountains took darker and darker shades. The atmosphere gained gradually the evening clearness.

From the thick, overgrown forest there came up a feeling of freshness, although about the post it was still warm. The voices of the Cossacks became more resonant, and seemed to stand still in the air.

The swift, cinnamon-coloured Terek was sharply divided from its immovable banks, with all its moving mass. It had already begun to fall; and in places the damp sand looked grey on the banks and in the shallows.

Right opposite the post on the other bank, all was deserted; there were nothing but low, unending, and waste reeds stretching up to the very mountains.

A little on one side, on the low bank, were to be seen the mud huts, the flat roofs, and the funnel-shaped chimneys of a Circassian village.

The sharp eyes of the Cossack who stood on the look-out gazed through the evening smoke of the peaceful village at the moving figures of the Circassian women, dimly seen in the distance in their blue and red dresses. Notwithstanding that the Cossacks were constantly expecting the crossing and attack of the Abreks—as the hostile Circassians were called—from the Tartar side, especially in the month of May, when the woods along the Terek are so thick that a man on foot has difficulty in breaking through them, and the river is so shallow that it can in many places be forded; and notwithstanding that two days before a Cossack had come from the regimental commander, with a circular, in

which it was said, that, according to information received from the spies, eight men were intending to cross the Terek, and that therefore special watchfulness was commanded,—no such watch was kept in the outposts.

The Cossacks were as if at home, without saddled horses, without their guns; some busied in fishing, others drinking, others out hunting.

The horse of the officer of the day was the only one saddled, which was walking on three legs in the brambles by the side of the woods; and only the Cossack on guard was in his uniform, with musket and sabre.

The corporal of the post, a tall, lean Cossack, with an extraordinarily long back-bone, and short legs and arms, sat, with his coat unhooked, on the terrace of the hut, and, with an expression of official idleness and

laziness, shutting his eyes, moved his head from one hand to the other.

An elderly Cossack, with a broad, greyish-black beard, and wearing nothing but a shirt girt with a black strap, lay on the water's edge, and lazily looked into the monotonous, curling, and eddying Terek. Others, also, oppressed by the heat, half undressed, were either washing their clothes in the Terek, weaving snares, or lying on the ground on the warm sand of the bank, humming songs.

One fellow, with an ugly and sunburnt face, evidently dead-drunk, lay on his back under one of the walls of the hut, which, two hours before, was in the shade, but which now was exposed to the full force of the oblique rays of the sun.

Lukasha, who stood on the look-out, was a tall, handsome young fellow, about twenty

years old, very like his mother. His face and all his build, in spite of the angularity of youth, expressed great physical and moral strength.

In spite of the fact that he had not long before been put on active duty, it was evident, from the broad expression on his face, and the quiet assurance of his pose, that he had already succeeded in establishing that military and somewhat proud bearing which is peculiar to Cossacks, and, in general, to everybody who is in the habit of carrying arms, because he was a Cossack, and knew his value to be no less than it really was.

His ample uniform coat was torn in one or two places; his cap was knocked in behind, in the Circassian style; his leggings were let down below his knees.

His clothing was not rich; but it sat on him with that special Cossack elegance, which

consists in imitation of the Circassian *jigit*, or bravo. On the real *jigit* everything is broad, torn, and careless: his arms only are good.

But this torn attire is put on and girt up, and his arms hang upon him in a special fashion, which not every one can manage to follow, and which immediately strikes the eye of a Cossack or of a Circassian.

Lukasha had this appearance of a *jigit*. Putting his hands on his sabre, and screwing up his eyes, he constantly looked towards the distant village. Separately the traits of his face were not good; but looking at his build, and at his black-browed, sensible face, every one would involuntarily say, "That is a fine young fellow."

"The women, the women in the village, have all scattered," he said in a sharp voice, lazily showing his brilliant white teeth, and

not addressing his remark to any one in particular.

Nazarka, who lay on the ground, close under him, quickly raised his head, and remarked,—

"They are probably only going for water."

"If I should only fire off my gun," said Lukasha, laughing; "how they would all be frightened!"

"It will not carry so far."

"Get out with you! My gun will carry farther than that. Wait awhile till it is their festival; and then I will go there, and make a visit to Ghirei Khan, and drink *buza*," said Lukasha, angrily beating off the gnats, which kept settling on him.

A noise in the wood turned the attention of the Cossacks.

A spotted mongrel setter, looking for

scent, and wagging its tail ran up to the post.

Lukasha recognized the dog of a neighbour, an old sportsman, Uncle Eroshka, and immediately afterwards perceived in the wood the figure of the old man himself.

Uncle Eroshka was a Cossack of gigantic stature, with a heavy beard as white as a swan, and with such broad shoulders and breast, that in the woods, where there was no one to compare with him, he did not look tall, all his strong members were so well-proportioned.

He had a torn blouse thrown over him, and on his feet wore sandals of deer-skin, tied on by a rag, which was wrapped about his legs, and on his head a ragged white fur cap.

Over one shoulder he carried a bag with smoked meat, for attracting the falcons; over the other he had on a strap a dead wild-

cat; behind him were fastened to his belt a bag with bullets, powder, and bread, a horse-tail for keeping off the gnats, a large dagger in a torn sheath spotted with blood, and two dead pheasants. Looking up to the post, he stopped.

"Hey, Lam!" he cried to his dog, with such a resounding voice, that the echo sounded far off into the forest; and swinging over his shoulder his great fowling-piece, called by the Cossacks a "flint," he took off his hat.

"Have you passed the day well, good people, hey?" turning to the Cossacks with the same merry voice, without any effort, but as loudly as if he were calling to somebody on the other side of the river.

"All right, uncle, all right!" merrily answered from various sides the youthful voices of the Cossacks.

"What have you seen? Tell us!" cried out Uncle Eroshka, wiping off with the sleeve of his coat the sweat from his broad red face.

"Listen, uncle! What sort of a falcon is it lives in yonder plane-tree? It comes out every evening," said Nazarka, turning, and pointing to the place with his shoulder and his foot.

"Oh! you—" suspiciously answered the old man.

"It is true, uncle. You just sit here awhile," answered Nazarka, laughing.

The Cossacks all began to laugh.

Nazarka had not seen any falcon at all; but the young Cossacks at the outpost had, for some time past, taken up the habit of teasing and chaffing Uncle Eroshka every time he came to them.

"Oh, you fool! you never do anything but

lie," said Lukasha to Nazarka from the look-out.

Nazarka immediately became quiet.

"If it is necessary to sit, I will sit," said the old man, to the great satisfaction of all the Cossacks. "But have you seen any wild boars there?"

"Is it easy to see wild boars?" said the corporal, very glad to have the opportunity of a little conversation, and leaning from side to side, and scratching his long back-bone with both of his hands.

"We ought to catch Abreks, there, and not wild boars. You have not heard anything, uncle, have you?" he added, winking without reason, and opening his rows of white teeth.

"Abreks?" said the old man: "no, I have not heard anything about them. Have you got any fresh wine? I am awfully thirsty:

fact. Well, just give me time, I will bring you some young wild boars: indeed I will! Bring on your wine," he added.

"So you want to sit, do you?" asked the corporal, as if he had not heard what Eroshka had said.

"Yes, I like to sit at night," answered Uncle Eroshka. "I will sit during the holidays, and, God grant, I will bite something; and then I will give it to you: indeed I will!"

"Uncle, eh, uncle!" sharply cried Luka from above, drawing attention to himself, upon which all the Cossacks immediately looked at Lukasha. "You just come up to the upper branch, and there you will find a fine herd of them. I am not lying. I went; and one of our Cossacks killed one of them. I speak the truth," he added, arranging his musket behind his back, and speaking with

such a voice, that it was evident he was not making fun.

"Ah, Lukasha *Urvan* is here?" said the old man, looking up. "In what place did he shoot him?"

"And you have not seen the spot? Why, even a little one can be seen," said Lukasha, "on the other bank," added he seriously, shaking his head.

"As we were going along the bank, it moved in the bushes, and my gun was unloaded. Iliaska, how he shoots! Yes, and I will show you, uncle, where the place is: it is not so far off. Just give me time. I know all the way there.—Uncle Mosef," added he decisively, and almost commandingly, to the corporal, "it is time to change guard;" and arranging his gun, and not waiting for any order, he began to come down from the look-out.

"Come down!" said the corporal afterwards, looking about him.

"It is your turn, Gurka," he said. "Go on.—Your Lukasha has got very sharp," added the corporal, turning to the old man: "as soon as you come, he never will sit at home. Only a little while ago he killed one."

CHAPTER VII.

THE sun had already set, and the shadows of night kept quickly advancing from the side of the forest. The Cossacks had finished their duties about the outpost, and had collected in the hut for supper.

Only the old sportsman, who was still expecting the falcon, and dragging about a piece of smoked meat tied to his leg, remained under the plane-tree. A falcon sat on the tree, but did not come down after the bait.

Lukashka, with all deliberation, was placing on the paths of the pheasants, beyond the brambles, traps and snares for them, and was

singing one song after another. In spite of his height and large hands, it was evident that every work, great or small, prospered in Lukashka's hands.

"Hey, Lukashka!" sounded the resonant voice of Nazarka not far from the wood. "The Cossacks have gone to supper."

Nazarka, with a live pheasant under his arm, making his way through the brambles, came out into the path.

"Oh!" said Lukashka, stopping his whistling; "where did you get that pheasant? It must have been my snare."

Nazarka was of the same age with Lukashka, and had also only the last spring come into active service. He was a small, ugly, thin, sickly-looking fellow, with a sharp voice which always resounded in your ears. He was a neighbour and comrade of Lukashka.

Lukashka sat in the Tartar way on the grass, and kept on arranging his snares.

"I don't know whose; probably yours."

"Did you find it beyond the ditch, under the plane-tree? Then it is mine: I set the snare yesterday."

Lukashka stood up, and looked at the pheasant. Smoothing with his hand its dark-blue head, which the frightened bird held out to him, and winking, he took it into his hands.

"We will make pilaf to-day. Go cut its throat, and pluck it."

"Shall we eat it ourselves, or give it to the corporal?"

"Oh! he will eat it with us."

"I am afraid to cut its throat," said Nazarka.

"Give it here."

Lukashka took a small knife from under

his dagger, and quickly cut the throat of the pheasant, which stretched itself, but did not yet succeed in fully expanding its wings, when its bleeding head had already fallen off.

"You ought to do it like that," said Lukashka, throwing aside the pheasant. We will have a good fat pilaf to-day."

Nazarka shuddered as he looked at the pheasant.

"Listen, Lukashka: that evil genius is going to send us again into an ambuscade," added he, taking up the pheasant, and by evil genius meaning the corporal. "He has sent Thomushka after wine, and it was his turn. What sort of a night is this to go out on? He always comes down on us."

Lukashka, whistling, went back to the outpost. "Catch hold of this line!" he said.

Nazarka obeyed. "I will tell him now," continued Nazarka: "I will tell him straight. Let us say we won't go, that we are tired out, and that is the end of it. Tell it straight: he will mind you. It is a bad mess."

"You have found something now to talk about," said Lukashka, evidently thinking of something else. "Nonsense! What difference does it make if he sends us out for the night? It is no harm. There you amuse yourself; and here what do you do? Whether you are in the outpost, or on an ambuscade, it is all the same. You—"

"But when are you going to the station?"

"Oh, well! I will go there in the holidays."

"Gurka said that your Dunaika was flirting with Thomushka," suddenly said Nazarka.

"Devil take her!" answered Lukashka, showing a whole row of white teeth, but not laughing. "Don't you suppose I can find another?"

"That is what Gurka said. He went, he says, to her, and her husband was not there. Thomushka was sitting there, and eating a pie,"—he stopped a moment; and then he went on,—"and, when he was under the window, he heard how she said, 'That wretch is gone! Why, my dear, don't you eat your pie? There is no use going home to sleep: stay here.' And he said, there under the window, 'All right!'"

"You lie!"

"By my honour, it is true!"

Lukashka became silent. "Well, she has found another; let him take her! There are plenty of girls like that. Besides, I had got tired of her."

"What a curious sort of a fellow you are!" said Nazarka. "You ought to make up to Marianka, the cornet's daughter: she does not flirt with anybody."

Lukashka snorted. "What's that about Marianka? They are all the same," he said.

"You make up to her."

"What have you to say about it? There are plenty of others."

Lukashka again began to whistle, and went back to the outpost, tearing off the leaves and twigs on each side of him.

In going through the bushes he suddenly stopped, and having noticed a smooth, dark sapling, he took his dagger out, and cut it.

"That is as straight as a gun," said he, making it whistle through the air as he brandished it.

The Cossacks sat at supper within the whitewashed walls of the post, on the clay floor, about a low Tartar table; and the conversation ran on the turn for the ambuscade.

"Whose turn is it to go now?" said one of the Cossacks, turning to the corporal, who stood at the open door of the hut.

"Yes, whose turn is it?" replied the corporal. "Uncle Burlak has gone, Thomushka has gone," he said, not quite sure. "I think you had better go,—you and Nazarka," turning to Luka. "Yes; and Ergushof will go, if he has waked up yet."

"You would never wake up: how do you expect him to wake up?" said Nazarka, in a half whisper.

The Cossacks laughed.

Ergushof was that very Cossack who was drunk, and sleeping outside of the hut. He

had only just come into the porch, rubbing his eyes.

Lukashka just then stood up, and got his gun ready.

"Yes, go as soon as you can. Finish your supper and go," said the corporal.

And not waiting for an expression of assent, the corporal shut the door, evidently not much expecting the obedience of the Cossacks.

"If it had not been ordered, I would not send you. You see, the captain has sent word. He says that eight Abreks are going to cross."

"What is all that? Of course it is necessary to go," said Ergushof: "it is the regulation. One cannot sit at home in a time like this. I tell you we must go."

Lukashka, meanwhile, holding with both hands before his mouth a large piece of

pheasant, and looking first at the corporal, and then at Nazarka, seemed quite indifferent to all that passed, and laughed at both of them.

The Cossacks had not yet got ready to go to the ambuscade when Uncle Eroshka, who had sat in vain under the plane-tree until it was quite dark, came up to the dark porch.

"Now, children," resounded his deep bass voice in the low porch, louder than all the rest, "come, I will go with you. You can sit and watch for Circassians, and I will sit for wild boars."

CHAPTER VIII.

It was already entirely dark when Uncle Eroshka and the three Cossacks from the outpost, in felt cloaks and with their muskets over their shoulders, went down along the Terek to the place appointed for the ambuscade.

Nazarka did not want to go at all; but Luka called him, and they quickly got ready.

After going on for some steps slowly, the Cossacks turned off from the ditch, and went to the Terek, along a scarcely perceptible path through the reeds.

On the bank there was a thick black log

pushed off into the water; and the leaves about the log had been freshly crushed down.

"Shall we watch here?" said Nazarka.

"Well," said Lukashka, "you watch here, and I will go on; and I will show uncle."

"This is the very best place: they won't see us, and we can see everything," said Ergushof. "Let us sit here. This will be the very best place."

Nazarka and Ergushof spread out their felt cloaks, and lay down behind the log, while Lukashka went on farther with Uncle Eroshka.

"There! Not very much farther, uncle," said Lukashka, walking noiselessly behind the old man. "I will show you where they went by. I know."

"Show me. You are my brave *Urvan*," answered the old man in a whisper.

After going on some steps, Lukashka

stood still, bent over a pool and whistled. "There's where they went by to drink. Do you see anything?" he said scarcely audibly, pointing out the fresh traces.

"Look out!" answered the old man. "The boar must be lying in the mud behind the ditch," he added. "I will watch here, and you go back."

Lukashka put on his cloak, and went back to the bank, looking sometimes to the left, to the wall of rushes, and sometimes towards the Terek, which was swirling along the bank.

"There is somebody watching there, or creeping along the side," he said to himself, thinking of the Circassians.

Suddenly a crashing noise, and a splash in the water, made him tremble, and seize his gun.

A boar jumped into the water from the

bank; and the black form, showing itself only for an instant against the gleaming surface of the water, concealed itself in the rushes.

Lukashka quickly seized hold of his gun, aimed, but did not fire. The boar had already got away into the forest.

Spitting from vexation, he went on farther. Coming to the place of the ambuscade, he again stopped, and slightly whistled.

His whistle was returned; and he went on to his companions.

Nazarka, who had rolled himself up in his cloak, was already asleep.

Ergushof sat with his legs turned up under him, and moved a little to one side to give place to Lukashka.

"Here, this is a very good place to watch. Excellent place!" he said. "Did you bring him to the place for the boar?"

"Yes, I showed it to him," said Lukashka, spreading his felt cloak on the ground. "And what a big boar I turned just now into the water! It must be the same one. Didn't you hear how it crackled in the bushes?"

"Yes, I heard how some animal crackled. I immediately knew it was an animal. I thought, 'Lukashka has frightened some kind of an animal,'" said Ergushof, wrapping himself up in his cloak. "I am going to sleep now," he added. "You wake me up after the cocks crow. After that we must take our turn. I am going to sleep; and then you can sleep, and then I will sit up: that is the way."

"Much obliged. But I don't want to sleep," answered Lukashka.

The night was dark, warm, and without a breeze. On one side only of the horizon the

stars shone: the other, and the greater part of the sky, towards the mountains, was covered with a large cloud.

The black cloud, rising up from the mountains, without any wind, slowly moved farther and farther, sharply separated by its wavy edge from the deep, starry heaven.

Just in front, the Cossack could see the Terek, and beyond it: behind him, and on both sides, it was cut off by a wall of reeds.

Once in a while the reeds, without any cause, would all begin to waver, and to whisper to each other. Under him, the waving feathers of the sedge-flowers seemed like branches of trees on the bright edge of the sky.

At his very feet was the river-bank, along which the stream swirled. Farther on, the shining, moving mass of the dark-coloured water monotonously broke against the shallows and the bank.

Still farther on, water and bank and cloud became mingled in impenetrable darkness.

On the surface of the water, dark shadows spread themselves, which the eye of the Cossack, by this time accustomed to them, recognized as shadows produced by snags and floating logs.

From time to time some heat lightning, reflected by the water, showed, as in a dark mirror, the line of the steep bank opposite him.

The measured sounds of night, the rustling of the reeds, the heavy breathing of the Cossacks, the buzzing of the gnats, and the rippling of the water, were broken occasionally by a distant shot, by the fall of a part of the bank, which had been washed away, by the splash of a large fish, or by the crashing of some animal through the thick, overgrown woods.

Once an owl flew down the Terek, flapping slowly: over the very heads of the Cossacks it turned towards the forest, and, flying towards a tree, began to flap more quickly, and afterwards, fluttering, settled down on an old plane-tree.

At every such unaccustomed sound, the ear of the wakeful Cossack pricked up, his eyes winked, and he slowly raised his gun.

The greater part of the night had passed. The black cloud, spreading westward with its ragged edges, opened to view a portion of the clear, starry sky; and the inverted golden moon shone right over the mountains. It began to be cool.

Nazarka woke up, said something, and went to sleep again.

Lukashka began to get tired, stood up, took a knife from under his dagger, and began to whittle a stick into slivers.

His head was full of thoughts as to how the Circassians lived in the mountains, how the bravos come to the Russian side of the river, how they are not afraid of the Cossacks, and how they might cross in another place.

He moved a little from his post, and looked down the river; but nothing was visible. Looking from time to time on the river and the farther bank, which was dimly distinguished from the water in the feeble moonlight, he had stopped thinking about the Circassians, and was only waiting for the time to wake up his companions and go back to the station.

At the station the form of his Dunaika presented itself to him,—"his little soul," as the Cossacks call a mistress,—and he thought of her with vexation.

Then came signs of morning: a silvery mist began to rise above the water; and

young eagles not far from him whistled shrilly, and flapped their wings.

At last the cry of the first cock came from the far-off station, immediately after which another prolonged cock-crow, to which the voices of others replied.

"It is time to wake them up," thought Lukashka, stopping his whittling, and feeling that his eyes were very heavy.

He turned to his companions, and began to try and guess to which body the various legs belonged; when suddenly it seemed to him that there was some kind of a splash on the other side of the Terek; and he looked once more to the gleaming line of the mountains, which was already lighted by the thin, down-turned crescent of the old moon, to the line of the bank, and to the logs floating down the Terek, which were now plainly visible.

It seemed to him for a moment that he was moving, and that the Terek and the logs were standing still; but this lasted only for an instant. He again began to look attentively.

One large black log, with a dry branch hanging from it, especially attracted his attention.

This log, in some strange way, without rolling over, or turning about, floated in the middle of the river; it even seemed to him that it was not floating with the current, but was going straight over the Terek to a long sand-bank.

Lukashka stretched out his neck, and began to look at it more attentively than ever.

The log floated up to the sand-bank, stopped, and then moved about in a strange way.

Lukashka thought he saw a hand on the other side of the log.

"I will kill an Abrek alone," he said, seized his gun, deliberately set up his rest, lay his gun across it, and, holding it fast, cocked it without making any noise; and then, holding his breath, began to aim, looking intently all the time. "I will not wake them up," he thought.

However, his heart beat so violently in his breast, that he stopped, and began to listen.

Suddenly the log moved off from the sand-bank, and began to float again straight across the current to the Russian bank.

"I am afraid I will miss it," he thought; and then, in the feeble light of the moon, a Tartar head just appeared in front of the log.

He aimed straight at the head, which seemed to him very near,—just at the end of his gun.

"He is an Abrek," he thought joyfully,

and, suddenly falling on his knees, again placed his gun, looked at the sight, which was scarcely visible at the end, took a long breath, and in the Cossack way, according to a custom learned in childhood, muttered to himself, "To Father and Son," and pulled the trigger.

The flash lighted up for a moment the reeds in the water.

The sharp, sudden report was carried over the river, and from somewhere in the distance an echo was returned.

The log was already floating down the river, with the current rocking it, and rolling it over.

"Hold on, I say!" cried Ergushof, seizing his gun, and rising up from behind the ambush.

"Keep still, you devil!" setting his teeth. Lukashka whispered to him, "Abreks!"

"What did you shoot at, Lukashka?"

Lukashka made no reply. He loaded his gun, and kept looking after the floating log.

Not far off, it stopped on a sand-bank; and from behind it there was seen something large, which moved up and down in the water.

"What did you hit? Why don't you tell?" repeated the Cossacks.

"Abreks, I tell you," repeated Luka.

"Do not lie in that way. Did your gun go off accidentally?"

"I have killed an Abrek. See what I shot!" said Luka, rising to his feet, with his voice full of emotion.

"A man was swimming," he said, pointing to the sand-bank; "I killed him. Look there!"

"What is the use of lying?" repeated Ergushoff, rubbing his eyes.

"I do not. Look! See there!" said Lukashka, seizing him by the shoulder, and pressing him with such force that he drew an exclamation from him.

Ergushof looked in the direction in which Lukashka pointed, and, seeing the body, suddenly changed his tone.

"Eh, I tell you there are more of them; I tell you the truth," he said, quickly looking at his gun. "This was the first. He swam from over there, not far on the other side: I tell you true."

Lukashka nodded his head, and began to take off his coat.

"What are you doing, you fool!" cried Ergushof. "Wait a little: you risk yourself for nothing, truly. If you have killed him, he cannot get away. Give me a little powder: have you got any?—Nazar, you go back quickly to the outpost, but do not go

along the bank. They will kill you: I tell you true."

"I go alone! Go yourself," said Nazar angrily.

Lukashka, having taken off his coat, went down to the bank.

"Don't go down there, I tell you!" said Ergushof, putting some powder in the pan of his gun. "He won't move. I can see that he is not alive. Let them have time to come here from the post.—Go on, Nazarka, are you afraid? Don't be afraid, I tell you."

"Luka, O Luka!" said Nazarka, "tell us how you killed him."

Lukashka was then thinking of getting into the water.

"You go back quickly, both of you, to the post. I will wait here. Tell the Cossacks to send some men by a roundabout way: if

they are on this side, we ought to catch them."

"I tell you they will get away," said Ergushof, getting up. We ought to catch them, truly."

Both Ergushof and Nazarka stood up, and after crossing themselves, went to the post, not along the bank, but scrambling through the bushes, and going out into the forest path.

"Now look, Luka: don't you move," said Ergushof, "or else they will kill you. See that you don't budge, I tell you."

"Go on: I know," said Lukashka, and, looking at his gun, he sat down behind the ambuscade.

Lukashka was alone.

He looked at the sand-bank, and listened for the Cossacks; but it was far from the outpost, and he was tormented with im-

patience: he kept thinking that the Abreks who had been with the dead man were running away.

Just as he was vexed about the boar that got away from him the night before, so was he vexed about the Abreks that were getting away now.

He looked first around him, and then to the other bank, expecting to see another man; and, fixing his rest, he got ready to fire.

That they might kill him, never entered his head.

CHAPTER IX.

It had already begun to grow light. The body of the Circassian, which had grounded on the sand-bank and now scarcely moved, was plainly visible.

Suddenly, not far from Lukashka, the reeds crackled, steps were heard, and the feathery tops of the reeds moved about.

Lukashka cocked his other barrel, and muttered, "To the Father and the Son."

As soon as he did this, the steps ceased.

"Hey, Cossacks, don't kill your uncle!" resounded a deep bass voice; and putting aside the reeds, Uncle Eroshka suddenly came up to him.

"I almost killed you, by all that's good I did!" said Lukashka.

"What did you fire at?" asked the old man.

His sonorous voice echoed over the wood, and down the river, and suddenly annihilated the quiet of night and the mystery which surrounded the Cossack. It suddenly seemed to have become lighter and clearer.

"You saw nothing at all, uncle, and I killed an animal," said Lukashka, uncocking his gun, and standing unnaturally quiet.

The old man, without turning his eyes for a moment, kept looking at the body of the man, now plainly visible, over which the Terek broke a little.

"He was swimming, with a log on his back? I was looking at him, and then . . . Look here! He has got blue drawers, and no gun.—Do you see?" said Lukashka.

"How not see!" solemnly said the old man; and his face became serious and stern. "You have killed a bravo," he said, almost sympathetically.

"I was sitting so, and looking; and all of a sudden I wondered what was so black on the other side. I looked at it once more, and apparently a man went by, and jumped into the water. There was nothing strange in that. But a log, a good sound log, was floating on the water,—not down with the current, but going across.

"Then I looked, and saw a head behind it. What was there strange in that? I moved a little, so that he could not see me through the reeds, and then cocked my gun. But the beast must have heard me; for he crawled up on the sand-bank, and looked about. 'You lie!' I thought, 'you won't get away.'

"He just crawled up and looked at me. Something resounded in his throat. I got ready my gun, without moving, and waited for him. He lay there, and lay there; and at last began to move again. When he swam into the moonlight his back was visible. 'To Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost,' I said; and I looked out through the smoke, and he was lying down.

"He groaned, or at least it seemed so to me. Then I thought, 'Please the Lord, I have killed him.' When he got down to that sand-bank, he was quite visible, and tried to stand up; but he had no strength. He was hit badly, and so he lay down. I could see it all quite plainly. He don't move now; and so he must be dead. The Cossacks have gone back to the post to tell the rest of them to come down."

"So you shot him?" said the old man.

"He is very far now;" and again he sadly shook his head.

Just at that time the Cossacks, both on foot and on horseback, with a loud crackling of the bushes, were heard along the bank.

"Are they bringing a boat?" cried Luka.

"Luka, my brave fellow, bring him ashore," cried one of the Cossacks along the bank.

Lukashka, without waiting for the boat, began to undress, never taking his eyes off the booty.

"Wait a minute! Nazarka is bringing a boat," cried the corporal.

"You fool! Perhaps he is alive. He is only pretending. Take a dagger with you!" cried another Cossack.

"Go on and talk," replied Lukashka, taking off his trousers.

He quickly undressed himself, crossed himself, and, giving a sudden spring, jumped

with a splash into the water, wetted himself all over, and then reaching out with his white arms, and lifting his back high above the water, cut across the current, and made for the sand-bank.

The crowd of Cossacks talked aloud with different voices. Three horsemen came up in a roundabout way.

The boat was seen beyond the turn.

Lukashka got up on the sand-bank, bent over the body, and turned it over twice. "He is quite dead," he yelled in a sharp voice.

The Circassian was hit in the head. He wore blue drawers, and had his shirt, his coat, his gun, and his dagger tied on his shoulders. Over all was fastened a large branch, which was what had deceived Luka at first.

"This is the way the carp was caught!" cried one of the Cossacks, who were now

standing in a circle, while the body, which had just been pulled out of the boat, lay on the grassy bank.

"How yellow he is!" said another.

"Where have our fellows gone to look? They are doubtless on the other bank. If he had not been the first, he would not have swum over in that way."

"Why did he swim over alone?" said a third.

"Oh! he must have been a sharp fellow, and came out to explore before the rest. He is evidently one of their best bravos," said Lukashka mockingly, wringing out his wet clothes on the bank, and constantly shivering. "His beard is dyed, and cut under a little."

"He put his shirt in that bag on his back: he could swim better without it," said some one.

"Listen, Lukashka!" said the corporal,

holding the gun which had been taken from the dead man "You take the dagger and the coat; and as for the gun —come, I will give you three roubles. See, it whistles well," said he, blowing down through the barrel. "I should like to have it for a remembrance."

Lukashka made no answer, and this request evidently vexed him much; but he knew he could not refuse it.

"What a demon he was!" he said, snorting, and throwing the Circassian's coat on the ground. "If it had only been a good coat, instead of rags!"

"It will be good to wear when you go for wood," said another Cossack.

"Mosef, I am going home," said Lukashka, evidently already forgetting his vexation, but wishing to use his present to the corporal to the best advantage.

"Well, go. Why not?"

"Carry the body to the post," said the corporal, turning to the Cossacks, and still examining the gun. "Yes; and make a covering of boughs over him. Perhaps they will come from the mountains to ransom him."

"It is not warm yet," said some one.

"A jackal may come and tear him. Will that be nice?" remarked another Cossack.

"We will put a guard over him, for they will certainly come to ransom him; and it would not be well to have him torn."

"Well, Lukashka, do as you please. But you ought to bring up a gallon to the boys," added the corporal merrily.

"That is what you ought to do," chimed in the Cossacks. "God give you good luck! You killed an Abrek without having seen him."

"Will some one buy the dagger and the coat? Give as much money as you can. I will sell the trousers, too," said Lukashka. "They won't fit me. What a sun-burnt wretch he was!"

One Cossack bought the coat for a rouble: another gave two gallons of wine for the dagger.

"Drink, boys, I will send you a gallon," said Lukashka. "I will bring it myself from the station."

"You might cut up the trousers for kerchiefs for the girls," said Nazarka.

The Cossacks all burst into a laugh.

"You have had laughing enough," said the corporal. "Take away the body! You cannot bring a mess like this into the hut."

"What are you standing still for? Bring it along here, boys!" said Lukashka, in a tone of command, to the Cossacks, who were

unwilling to take hold of the body; and the Cossacks obeyed the order as if he were the corporal.

Having dragged it some steps on, the Cossacks laid down the legs, which lifelessly trembling, sank to the earth, and, walking off a little, stood silent for some time.

Nazarka went up to the body, and arranged the head so as to see the bloody round hole over the temple and the face.

"Oh, what a mark you made! In the very brain!" he said. "You cannot get away now: your owners will always know you."

No one answered anything; and again the angel of silence flew over the Cossacks.

The sun had already risen, and with its broken rays lighted up the dewy ground.

The Terek murmured not far off in the waking forest: pheasants, too, met the morn-

ing, and were crowing to each other on all sides.

The Cossacks stood silently, and without moving, around the dead body, and looked at it.

The dark-brown body, clad in nothing but the wet, dark-blue cotton trousers, tied tight with a girdle about the fallen belly, was well-built and handsome. The muscular arms lay straight down along the sides. The bluish, freshly-shaven round head, with the wound on the temple, was turned up. The smooth, sun-burnt brow was sharply distinct from the shaven places. The glassy eyes were open, with the pupils remaining visible, and looked up, it seemed, past every one. On the thin lips, which were stretched apart on the edges, and contrasted with the red, half-shaven moustaches, there seemed to remain a good-natured, shrewd smile. The small,

bony hands were covered with tawny hair; the fingers were bent in; and the nails were tinged red.

Lukashka had not yet dressed himself. He was still wet, his neck was redder, and his eyes shone more than usual; his broad cheeks trembled; and from his white, healthy body, seemed to rise into the morning air a visible vapour.

"He, too, was a man," he said, evidently half in love with the corpse.

"Yes, he came to grief: he had no chance," said one of the Cossacks.

The angel of silence flew away.

The Cossacks moved about, and began to talk to one another. Two went to get branches to cover the body; others went off to the post.

Lukashka and Nazarka ran to get ready to go to the station.

Half an hour afterwards, through the thick forest which separated the Terek from the station, Lukashka and Nazarka went home, almost on a run, but talking without cessation.

"See that you don't tell her that I sent you, but go see whether her husband is at home or not," said Lukashka, in a sharp voice.

"Yes; and I will go to Yamka's. Shall we spree a little?" said the obedient Nazarka.

"Why shouldn't we spree?" answered Lukashka.

After coming to the station, the Cossacks took a drink, and then lay down to sleep until evening.

CHAPTER X.

THREE days after the events which I have just described, two companies of a Caucasus infantry regiment came to be quartered at the station of Novomlinsk.

The unharnessed waggon-train was already standing on the square.

The cooks had dug a ditch, and had brought from the different yards bits of wood (which were lying about), and were already boiling the soup.

The sergeants were counting the men. Stakes were being driven, to which to tie the horses. The quarter-masters were going here

and there through the streets, pointing out their quarters to officers and soldiers.

On this side were green boxes, piled up in a line: on that were the harness and the horses. Here were the kettles in which the soup was boiling: there were the captain and the lieutenant, and Onesim Michailovitch, the sergeant-major.

And all this was at that very station, where, as they had heard, it had been ordered that the companies should be quartered. Therefore the companies were at home.

"Why were they quartered there? What sort of people were the Cossacks? Were they glad to have them quartered upon them? Were they dissenters, or not?"

To answer such questions was not their business.

Crowds of dusty and tired soldiers, noisily and disorderly, like a swarm of bees, scat-

tered themselves about the square, and through the streets. Not in the least noticing the unfriendly disposition of the Cossacks, in twos and threes, with merry conversation, and clattering with their muskets, they entered the huts, hanging up their ammunition, scattering about their bags and knapsacks, and jesting with the women.

At the place which all soldiers love,—the soup-kettles,—there was collected a large group with pipes in their teeth. The soldiers were looking,—now at the smoke, which imperceptibly rose into the warm sky, and grew and thickened upon them, like a white cloud; now at the flame of the soup-fires, which, like melted glass, trembled in the clear air; and joked and laughed about the Cossacks with the Cossack women, because they did not live exactly as the Russians did.

In every yard there were seen soldiers; and everywhere was heard their laughter, as well as the sharp, shrill cries of the Cossack women, who were defending their houses, and refusing to give water and dishes.

Boys and girls crept close to their mothers, and, to judge from their frightened astonishment, were following after every movement of the armed people,—people they had never seen in all their lives,—others were running after them at a respectful distance.

Old Cossacks came out of their huts, sat down on the terraces, and darkly and silently looked at the bustle of the soldiers, as though they submitted to the vexation in spite of themselves, yet did not understand what the result of it would be.

Olenin, who had now been already three months a yunker of this Caucasus regiment, had had quarters given to him in one of the

best houses of the station,—with the cornet Ilia Vassilitch, that is, with old Mother Ulitka.

"What sort of a business will this be, Dimitri Andreitch?" said Vanusha to Olenin, who, in a Circassian uniform, was riding a Kabarda pony bought in Grozni, and, after a five hours' march, was gayly coming into the yard of the quarters which had been set apart for him.

"Well, Ivan Vassilitch?" he asked, patting his horse, and amusedly looking at Vanusha, covered with sweat, with disordered hair, and with a dejected face, who had arrived with the train, and was unpacking things.

Olenin externally seemed quite another man. Instead of shaven cheeks, he had young whiskers and a beard.

Instead of a yellowish face, worn out by

late nights, a ruddy, healthy tan appeared on his cheeks, on his forehead, and behind his ears. Instead of a brand-new black evening coat he wore a dirty white Circassian coat, with broad folds; and he carried a rifle. Instead of a freshly starched linen collar there could be seen the red neck-piece of his silk shirt, buttoned around his sun-burnt neck.

He was dressed in Circassian style, but badly. Anybody would know him for a Russian, and not for a bravo. All was right, and yet all wrong. Notwithstanding this, his whole exterior was radiant with health, gaiety, and self-content.

"It may be laughable enough for you," said Vanusha, "but just come yourself, and talk to these people. They won't give you an entrance. Yes, and that is not the end of it,—you can hardly get a word from them."

Vanusha angrily threw his iron pail down on the threshold. "They are not Russians, these fellows!"

"But have you asked the chief of the station?"

"But I don't know where he lives," said Vanusha, in an insulted tone.

"Who is insulting you?" asked Olenin, looking round.

"The deuce take them! Whew! The master is not at home. They say he has gone to some *kriga* (a fishing-hole); and the old woman is such a monster that the Lord preserve us!" answered Vanusha, seizing hold of his hat.

"How we are going to live here I don't know. They are worse than Tartars! It is all nonsense calling them Christians: why even Tartars would be better. Gone to a *kriga*, indeed! What sort of a thing do

they mean by a *kriga?* Nobody knows," concluded Vanusha, and turned away.

"So, then, it is not as it would be in our village at home?" said Olenin, turning about, but not getting down from his horse.

"Let me take your horse," said Vanusha, evidently puzzled by what was for him a new order of things, but obedient to his fate.

"So a Tartar is better? O Vanusha!" repeated Olenin, getting down from his horse, and slapping the saddle with his hand.

"Yes: you may laugh as much as you like. It may be laughter for you," said Vanusha, in an angry voice.

"But hold on; don't get angry, Ivan Vasilitch!" answered Olenin, continuing to smile. "Wait a minute. I will go to the people of the house; I will arrange everything; we will live here very comfortably yet; only don't get excited."

Vanusha did not reply, but, winking his eyes, looked contemptuously at his master, and shook his head.

Vanusha looked on Olenin only as his master: Olenin looked on Vanusha only as his servant.

They would both have been very much astonished if any one had told them they were friends; and yet they were friends, without either of them knowing it.

Vanusha had been taken into the house as an eleven-year-old boy, when Olenin was of the same age.

When Olenin got to be fifteen, he once occupied himself with educating Vanusha, and taught him how to read French, of which Vanusha was very proud; and now Vanusha, when he is in a contented frame of mind, says a French word or two with a very stupid smile.

Olenin ran up to the porch of the cottage, and knocked at the door.

Marianka, in nothing but a pink shirt (just as Cossack girls are usually dressed at home), jumped in a frightened way from the door, and, crowding up against the wall, covered the lower part of her face with the broad sleeve of her Tartar shirt.

Opening the door a little farther, Olenin saw in the half-light all the tall and stately figure of the young girl.

With the quick and envious curiosity of youth, he involuntarily noticed her strong and girl-like form (which just showed itself through the thin calico shirt), and her pretty black eyes, gazing at him with childish horror and wild inquisitiveness.

"That is she," thought Olenin. "Yes; but there are many such," immediately came into his head. And he opened the other door

into the cottage. Old Mother Ulitka, also with nothing on but a shirt, was bending over, with her back to him, and sweeping the floor.

"Good-day, mother! I have come about the quarters."

The Cossack woman, without straightening herself, turned towards him a stern but still handsome face.

"What have you come about? You want to laugh at me? Eh? I will make you laugh, plague take you!" she cried, looking askance at the intruder from under her frowning brows.

Olenin had at first thought that the brave army of the Caucasus would be received everywhere with joy, and especially by its Cossack comrades of the war; and therefore such a reception puzzled him. Putting on a brave face, however, he tried to explain

that he intended to pay for the rooms; but the old woman would not allow him to finish.

"What have you come for? We have no need of you, with your wry mug. Wait a little. The master will come home; and he will show you a place. I don't need your filthy money. You spoil the house with your tobacco-smoke, and then you want to pay for it with money. Have not I seen just such rascals? May they shoot you through the heart!" she shrilly cried, pushing Olenin out at the door.

"It is evident that Vanusha is right," thought Olenin. "A Tartar would be better; and, accompanied by the scolding of Mother Ulitka, he went out of the cottage.

As he was going out, Marianka, still dressed in her pink shirt, but already swathed up to her very eyes with a white shawl, unexpectedly darted past him from the porch.

Quickly pattering along on the steps with her bare feet, she ran down the porch, stopped, suddenly looked at the young man with laughing eyes, and concealed herself behind the corner of the house.

The firm, youthful walk, the wild look, the flashing eyes from under the white shawl, and the lithe form of the beauty, acted still more strongly than before on Olenin.

"It must be she," he thought; and thinking still less about his quarters, and constantly looking at Marianka, he went back to Vanusha.

"What a wild sort of a girl!" said Vanusha, still busying himself with the baggage waggon, but in a little better humour. "She is just like a young colt in the pasture. *La femme!*" he added, in a loud and triumphant voice, and giggled.

CHAPTER XI.

At evening the master of the house returned from fishing, and, learning that he would be paid for his rooms, appeased his wife, and satisfied the demands of Vanusha.

In the new quarters everything soon got arranged. The people of the house went over to the winter cottage, and gave the summer one to the yunker for three roubles a month.

Olenin ate something, and then took a nap. When he woke up, just before evening, he washed himself, brushed himself, dined, and, smoking a cigarette, sat at the window and looked out into the street.

The heat had abated somewhat. The

oblique shadow of the cottage, with its carved gable, lay across the opposite street, breaking on the wall of the opposite house; the steep reed thatch of the house opposite shone in the rays of the setting sun; the air became fresher.

In the village everything was quiet; the soldiers had retired to their quarters, and had become still; the herds had not yet been driven home; and the people had not yet come back from their work.

The quarters of Olenin were almost on the edge of the village. From time to time, somewhere far beyond the Terek, in the place from which Olenin had come, shots were faintly heard in the Tchetchna, or on the Kumik plain. Olenin felt very well after his three-months' campaign.

On his freshly washed face he felt a coolness; on his strong body, a feeling of cleanli-

ness unusual during the campaign; and in all his rested members, quiet and strength.

In his soul, too, everything was fresh and clear. He remembered the campaign, and the dangers which he had escaped: he remembered that, during the time of danger, he had conducted himself very well; that he was no worse than others; and that he had been received into the companionship of the brave Caucasians.

His Moscow recollections were already goodness knows where. His whole life had been wiped out, and a new one begun,—a wholly new life, in which there were as yet no mistakes.

Here, like a new man among new people, he could deserve a new and good opinion of himself. He felt the youthful feeling of causeless joy in living; and looking out of the window, first at the boys who were driv-

ing their tops in the shadow of the house, then on his newly arranged quarters, he thought how pleasantly he was situated in this station-life, which was still new to him. He looked also at the mountains and at the sky; and in all his recollections there was a mingled and strong feeling of the grandeur of nature.

His life had begun, not as he expected it would when he went away from Moscow, but unexpectedly well. Mountains, mountains, mountains, were mingled in all that he thought and felt.

"He has kissed the pot! He has licked the pitcher! Uncle Eroshka has kissed the pot!" suddenly cried out the Cossack boys, who were whipping their tops under the window, turning to the side-street.

"He has kissed the pot! He has drunk up his dagger!" they cried, crowding together, and retreating.

These cries were directed at Uncle Eroshka, who with his gun on his shoulder, and with a lot of pheasants dangling from his belt, was returning from shooting.

"It is my sin; it is my sin!" he said, boldly looking towards the windows of the huts on both sides of the streets. "Yes, I have drunk away my dagger: it is my fault," he repeated, evidently angry, but pretending that it was all the same to him.

Olenin was astonished at the way the boys treated the old sportsman, and was still more surprised at the expressive face and the strong build of the man whom they called Uncle Eroshka.

"Uncle! Cossack!" he said, turning to him, "come here!"

The old man looked up towards the window, and stopped.

"Good-day, good man!" said he, lifting his cap from his closely-clipped head.

"Good-day, good man!" answered Olenin. "What are the boys calling out at you for?"

Uncle Eroshka came up to the window.

"They are teasing me, an old man. Well, it is nothing: I love them. Let them be a little amused with their old uncle," he said, with those firm and resonant intonations which are to be expected from old men of high positions. "Are you the army commander?"

"No, I am a yunker. Where did you kill those pheasants?" asked Olenin.

"Oh! I shot three hens in the woods," answered the old man, turning to the window his broad back, on which hung three pheasants, with their heads twisted into his belt, and splashing him with their blood.

"Haven't you seen any?" he asked. "If you will, take a pair of them. Come!" And he reached two pheasants into the win-

dow. "Why, are you a sportsman too?" he asked.

"Yes, I am very fond of shooting: on the campaign I killed four."

"Four! That is many," laughingly said the old man. "Are you a drunkard too? Do you drink fresh wine?"

"Why not? I like to drink a little too."

"Ah! I see you are a fine young fellow. We shall be very good friends," said Uncle Eroshka.

"Come in," said Olenin, "and we will drink a little fresh wine."

It was evident, from the face of the old man, that the yunker pleased him; and he immediately understood, that at the yunker's he could drink wine for nothing; and therefore he could afford to give him a pair of pheasants.

Some minutes afterwards the figure of

Uncle Eroshka showed itself at the door of the hut.

Then only did Olenin notice the immense size and strength of the man, notwithstanding that his dark-red face, with its perfectly white, bushy beard, was quite covered with old, deep, and weary-looking wrinkles.

The muscles of his legs, his arms, and his shoulders, were as full and firm as in a young man. On his head, under his short hair, deep scars were visible. His sinewy, thick neck was covered, like that of an ox, with folds of flesh. His warty hands were bruised and scratched.

He quickly and lightly stepped over the threshold, took off his gun, set it down in the corner, and, with a quick glance, took in and estimated the furniture and effects in the cottage, and with his legs wrapped up in rags, without hastening, walked into the

middle of the room. There came into the room with him a strong but not unpleasant mixed odour of fresh wine, of vodka, of powder, and of dried blood.

Uncle Eroshka bowed, arranged his beard, and, coming up to Olenin, gave him his thick black hand.

"*Koshkildy*," he said. "That means, in Tartar, we wish you health. Peace to you, as they say."

"*Koshkildy!* I know," answered Olenin, giving him his hand.

"Ah! you don't know the way of saying it," said Uncle Eroshka, nodding in disapproval. "When they say to you, '*Koshkildy!*' you must say, '*Allah razi bo sun!*'—'thank God!' That is the way, my father, and not, '*Koshkildy.*' I will teach you everything. You are just like Ilya Moseitch, one of your Russians: we were great friends.

He was a drunkard and a thief and a sportsman,—and what a sportsman!—and I taught him everything."

"What will you teach me?" asked Olenin, more and more interested in the old man.

"I will teach you hunting; I will teach you how to fish; I will show you the Circassians; and I will find you a pretty girl if you want. That is the kind of man I am. I am a joker;" and the old man began to laugh.

"I will sit down, my father, I am tired. *Karga?*" he added interrogatively.

"What does *karga* mean?" asked Olenin.

"Oh! that means 'good,' in Georgian. I always say so: it is one of my sayings,—my favourite word, *karga*. *Karga*, when I say it, means that I am joking. Well, my father, tell them to bring me some wine. Have you got a soldier? Yes! Ivan," cried the old

man. "All your fellows that are soldiers are always Ivan. Is yours Ivan too?"

"Yes, Ivan.—Vanusha, get some wine from the mistress, and bring it here."

"It is all the same,—Vanusha, or Ivan. Why, among you soldiers, is everybody Ivan?" repeated the old man.

"You, my good man, ask for wine from the cask already begun. They have the best in the village. But see you don't pay more than thirty kopeks the quart. She, that witch, would be glad to—. Our people are anathema, and great fools," continued Uncle Eroshka, in a confidential tone, when Vanusha had gone out.

"They don't consider you as people at all: they think that you are worse than Tartars; you are worldly, and Russians. But, from my view, even if you are a soldier, you are a man: you still have a soul in you. That is

my way of looking at things. Ilya Moseitch was a soldier; and what a man of gold he was! Is not that so, my father? That is the reason that our people do not love me. To me it is all the same. I am a merry fellow, I, Eroshka. I love everybody. Eh, my father?" And the old man affectionately patted the shoulder of Olenin.

CHAPTER XII.

VANUSHA, meanwhile, who had succeeded in arranging all his belongings, in getting shaved at the barber's, and in letting down his trousers outside of his boots, as a sign that the company was now in commodious quarters, was in the very best humour.

He attentively, but in a way malevolently, looked at Eroshka, as at a wild beast that he had never seen before, shook his head at the muddied floor, and, taking two empty bottles from under the bench, went to the people of the house.

"Good evening, good people!" he said,

having decided to be especially agreeable. "The master has ordered me to buy some tchikhir wine. Pour it out for me, good people."

The old woman made no answer. The girl, who stood before a small Tartar mirror, was arranging a kerchief on her head: she turned towards Vanusha.

"I will pay money, respected people," said Vanusha, shaking the copper-pieces in his pocket. "You be good, and we will be good: that is the best way to do."

"How much?" abruptly asked the old woman.

"A gallon."

"Pour it out for him," said Mother Ulitka, turning to her daughter. "Draw it from the cask that is begun, my dear."

The girl took the keys, and quickly went out of the cottage, together with Vanusha.

"Tell me, please, what sort of a woman is that?" asked Olenin, pointing to Marianka, who was then passing by the window.

The old man winked, and nudged Olenin with his elbow.

"Stop!" he said, and looked out of the window.

"Hem, hem!" he coughed, and called, "Marianka, O sister Marianka! Love me, my little soul!—I am a jester," he added in a whisper, turning to Olenin.

The girl, without turning her head, but giving a strong and decided gesture of dissent, went past the window with that masculine gait which Cossack girls have. But she slowly turned on the old man her dark, shaded eyes.

"Love me, and you will be happy," cried Eroshka, and, winking, looked at Olenin in a questioning way.

"I am a young fellow still: I am a jester," he added. "She is a queen of a girl, is she not?"

"A beauty!" said Olenin. "Call her here."

"Come, now. Now, now," said the old man. "They are wanting her for Lukashka. Lukashka is a brave young fellow, a *jigit*. The other day he killed an Abrek. I will find you something better. I will get you one that will be all in silk, and will walk in silver. When I have said it once, I will do it. I will find you a beauty."

"You are an old man, and what do you say?" replied Olenin. "That is a sin."

"Sin, where is the sin?" answered the old man decisively.

"Is it a sin to look at a pretty girl? Is it a sin to go about with her? Or is it a sin to

love her? Do you Russians think that? No, my little father: that is not a sin, but salvation. God made you; God made the girl too; everything He made, my father: so it is not a sin to look at a pretty girl. That is my way of looking at things, my good man."

Going through the court, and into the dark cellar filled with casks, Marianka went up to a cask, and put a dipper in it.

Vanusha, standing at the door, smiled as he looked at her. It seemed to him awfully funny that she had on nothing but a shirt, which was drawn tight behind and loose in front when she bent over, and still funnier that she had half-roubles strung round her neck.

He thought that was not Russian, and that at home, among the serfs, everybody would laugh if they saw such a girl as that. "*La fill com c'est tres beu* for her different ways,"

he thought. "I will tell my master about her."

"What are you standing still for, you fool?" suddenly cried the girl. "Give me the pitcher!"

Having filled the pitcher with the cold red wine, Marianka gave it to Vanusha.

"Give the money to mother," she said, pushing back Vanusha's hand, with the money in it.

Vanusha burst out into a laugh.

"Why are you so angry, my dear?" he said good-humouredly, standing there while the girl covered the cask.

She began to laugh.

"Are you good?"

"My master and I are very good," affirmatively replied Vanusha. "We are such people, that, wherever we have lived, the people are always contented with us: because he is a nobleman."

The girl stopped as she listened.

"And is he married,—your master?" she asked.

"No: my master is too young to marry, because noble people never marry when they are young," said Vanusha, in a didactic tone.

"Stupid! He ate like a buffalo, and he is too young to marry! Is he the commander of all of you?" she asked.

"My master is a yunker, which means that he is not yet an officer. But personally he is much greater than a general, more noble, because not only our colonel, but even the Tsar, knows him," proudly explained Vanusha. "We are not such people as the rest of the soldiers. Our father is a senator: he has for himself more than a thousand serfs; and they send us money by thousands at a time. That is the reason everybody always loves us. Sometimes you will find a captain with-

out any money at all; and what is the use ?"

"Come, I am going to shut up," interrupted the girl.

Vanusha brought the wine, and explained to Olenin that *la fill c'est tre juli*, and immediately went out with a stupid laugh.

CHAPTER XIII.

MEANWHILE they were beating the retreat on the great square. People were coming back from work. The cattle were crowding into the gates, in a great cloud of dust. The girls and the women were bustling along the streets and in the yards, collecting their cattle.

The sun had set behind the distant snowy range. A shadow stretched along the earth and sky.

Over the dark orchards the stars came out one by one, almost invisibly; and the sounds of the village gradually died out.

When they had collected the cattle, the Cossack girls went out to the corners of the streets and, crunching seeds, sat down on the terraces.

Marianka, who had milked two cows and a buffalo, came up to one of these groups.

The group consisted of several women and girls, and one old Cossack.

Talk turned on the Abrek who had been killed.

The Cossack told the story; and the women asked him questions.

"He will have, I suppose, a big reward," said a Cossack woman.

"Why, of course. They say they are going to send him a cross."

"Mosef even then wanted to insult him. He took away his gun; but the authorities in Kizliar have found it out."

"What a mean fellow, that Mosef!"

"They say that Lukashka is come," said one girl.

"He is at Yamka's" (Yamka was an old Cossack woman, who kept a drinking-house), "drinking with Nazarka. They say they have drunk two gallons."

"Oh, that *Urvan's* luck!" said some one. "He is really an *Urvan*. "Well, he is a nice young fellow. His father was just like him, —Father Kiriak: he was father to everybody. When they killed him, all the village went to his funeral. See, there they come!" said the woman who was talking, pointing to the two Cossacks coming along the street towards them. "Ergushof somehow has joined them. What a drunkard he is!"

Lukashka, with Nazarka and Ergushof, after having drunk half a gallon, came up to the girls.

All three of them, especially the old Cossack, were redder than usual. Ergushof staggered, and, laughing loudly, punched Nazarka in the side.

"Why don't you sing us a song?" he cried to the girls. "I tell you, sing us something when we are on a spree."

"Have you passed the day well? Have you passed the day well?" were heard congratulations.

"Sing? How? Is it a festival?" said an old woman. "You have got swelled up with drink. Sing something yourself."

Ergushof laughed, and punched Nazarka: "You play, and I will play too. I am good at it, I tell you."

"Why have the pretty girls all gone to sleep?" said Nazarka. "We have come back from the post to drink good luck. We have been drinking good luck to Lukashka."

Lukashka, coming up to the group, slowly pushed back his cap, and stood before the girls. His broad cheeks and neck were all red.

He stood, and spoke quietly and moderately; but under his moderation, and the quietness of his movements, there was more life and force than in the talkativeness and bustle of Nazarka.

He reminded one of a colt, which, after throwing up its tail and snorting, suddenly stands still, as if chained and fettered.

Lukashka stood in this quiet way before the girls. His eyes laughed: he spoke little, looking first at his drunken companions, and then at the girls.

When Marianka came up to the corner, with an even, deliberate movement he lifted his cap, stood on one side, and then again stood in front of her, lightly putting out one

leg, putting his thumbs in his belt, and playing with his dagger.

Marianka, in answer to his salute, slowly bowed her head, then sat down on the terrace, and took some sunflower-seeds out of her bosom.

Lukashka, without dropping his eyes, looked at Marianka, and, crunching seeds, spat the skins out.

All had become quiet as Marianka came up.

"Well, have you come for long?" said one of the women, breaking the silence.

"Till morning only," deliberately answered Lukashka.

"Well, God give you good return," answered the Cossack. "I am very glad, as I was saying just now."

"And I say so too," said the drunken Ergushof laughing. "We have got guests, have we?" he added, pointing to a soldier

who went by. "Soldiers' whiskey is good: I love it!"

They have sent three of them to us," said one of the women. "Father went to the commander; but they say they could not help it."

"Ah, ah! so you have got some trouble!" said Ergushof.

"So they have smoked you up with tobacco, have they?" asked another woman.

"Let them smoke in the yard as much as they please; but we won't let them into the house. Even if the commander came, I would not let him in. They steal everything too. Why don't the station-master take all these devils himself, I would like to know?"

"So you don't like it?" again said Ergushof.

"And they say, too, that orders have been given to the girls to get beds ready for the

soldiers, and to give them wine and honey to drink," said Nazarka, sticking out one leg, like Lukashka, and also pushing back his cap to the nape of his neck.

Ergushof burst into a loud laugh, and seizing the girl he sat next to hugged her.

"Yes, it is all true."

"Enough of that!" squealed the girl. "I will tell my mother!"

"Tell her!" he cried. "And Nazarka tells the truth. There was a circular: he knows how to read, you see. It is true, I tell you." And he proceeded to hug the next girl in order.

"Will you stop, rascal?" laughingly said the rosy, round-faced Ustenka, pushing him away.

Ergushof moved to one side, and almost fell down.

"They say that girls have not any strength. She has almost killed me."

"Now stop; go back to the post with you!" said Ustenka, and, turning away from him, again burst into a laugh.

"So you slept, and did not see the Abrek. If he had only killed you, it would have been much better."

"She scolded you well," laughed Nazarka.

"I will scold you in the same way," she said.

"She has no sorrow. . . . It does not matter to her . . . scolded me! O Nazarka!" said Ergushof.

Lukashka all the time was silently looking at Marianka; and his gaze evidently disturbed the girl.

"Well, Marianka, I hear they have quartered the commander at your house," said he, moving towards her.

Marianka, as always, did not answer at once, but slowly raised her eyes to the Cossack.

Lukashka's eyes laughed, as though something especial, independent of the conversation, was going on at this time between him and the girl.

"Yes, they are very well off, because they have two cottages," interrupted the old woman behind Marianka. "They also quartered one of their commanders on Thomushka. They say they have filled up the court-yard full of goods; so that he has not any place at all to go to. It is an unheard-of thing that they should send a whole horde of them to the village! But what can you do?" she said. "And what a row they will kick up here!"

"They say they are going to build a bridge over the Terek," said one girl.

"I heard," said Nazarka, coming up to Ustenka, "that they are going to dig a ditch, and bury all the girls in it, because they won't

love the young fellows;" and he again made the bow he was so fond of, after which all laughed, while Ergushof immediately began to embrace the old Cossack woman, leaving out Marianka, who followed in order.

"Why don't you kiss Marianka? Go all in order," said Nazarka.

"No, no-o: my old woman is sweeter," cried Ergushof, kissing the old woman, who was endeavouring to push him off.

"You are choking me," she cried, laughing.

A measured tread of feet at the end of the street interrupted the laughter. Three soldiers in overcoats, with rifles over their shoulders, were going to change guard over the regimental chest.

The corporal, an old cavalry man, looking angrily at the Cossacks, brought the soldiers along close, so as to make Lukashka and Nazarka move out of the way.

Nazarka drew to one side; but Lukashka, only frowning, turned his head and his broad back, and did not stir.

"People are standing here; go round," said at last the corporal, nodding obliquely and contemptuously to the soldiers.

The soldiers silently went by, marching with measured steps along the dusty road.

Marianka burst into a laugh, and, after her, all the other girls.

"These are elegant fellows!" said Nazarka. "Regular long-skirted choir-singers."

And he marched along the road in odd imitation of them.

All burst into loud laughter.

Lukashka slowly walked up to Marianka.

"So the commander is quartered on you?" he asked.

Marianka thought a moment.

"They let him go into the new cottage," she said.

"What is he,—old, or young?" asked Lukashka, sitting down by her side.

"Do you suppose I asked?" answered the girl. "I went for wine for him, saw him and Uncle Eroshka sitting at the window,—a red-haired sort of fellow. He brought a whole cartload of baggage with him."

And she lowered her eyes.

"How glad I am that I got permission to come back from the outpost!" said Lukashka, moving nearer on the earth terrace to the girl, and always looking straight into her eyes.

"Well, do you come for long?" asked Marianka, slightly smiling.

"Till morning. Give me some seeds," he added, stretching out his hand.

Marianka then gave a pleasant smile, and

opened the bosom of her shirt. "Do not take them all," she said.

"Really, I was very lonesome without you," said Lukashka slowly and in a quiet tone, as he took the seeds from the bosom of the girl, and moved still nearer to her, and began to say something to her in a whisper, with laughing eyes.

"I shan't come: I have said so," suddenly said Marianka aloud, moving off a little from him.

"Really, what was I going to say to you? Come, come, Mashinka."

Marianka shook her head in dissent, but smiled.

"Sister Marianka! O sister! mother wants you. Supper is ready!" cried, running up to the Cossack girls, the younger sister of Marianka.

"I am coming immediately," answered the

girl. "You go on; go on alone. I will come very soon."

Lukashka rose, and lifted his cap.

"It is evident I ought to go home: I have better business there," he said, pretending to be indifferent, but scarcely containing a smile, and was soon hid behind the corner of the houses.

Meanwhile, night had already settled on the village. The bright stars spangled the dark sky. The streets were dark and empty.

Nazarka remained with the Cossack girls on the terrace; and their laughter could be heard a long distance; but Lukashka, going off with quiet step from the girls, like a cat, suddenly began to run noiselessly,—holding his dagger, which rattled with his movements, —not homewards, but towards the house of the cornet.

After he had run two streets, and had turned the corner, he arranged his coat, and sat down on the ground in the shade of the fence.

"The cornet's daughter is a fine girl," he thought about Marianka. "She does not jest, confound it! Only give me time."

The steps of a woman coming near aroused him.

He began to listen, and laughed to himself.

Marianka, with head bent in front of her, came with even steps straight towards him, tapping the bars of the fence with her switch. Lukashka rose.

Marianka trembled, and stood still.

"Oh, you horrid creature, you frightened me so! You did not go home," she said, and laughed aloud.

Lukashka embraced the girl with one arm,

and with the other hand took her by the face. Something I wanted to say to you, I did!"

His voice trembled and broke.

"What kind of talk have you found at night?" asked Marianka. "Mother is waiting for me. You go to your love!"

And, freeing herself from his hands, she ran away a few steps; but when she came to the gate of her yard, she stopped still, and turned towards Lukashka, who was running by her side, and kept trying to persuade her to wait a little.

"Now, what do you want to tell me, you night-prowler?" and she again began to laugh.

"Do not laugh at me, Marianka. What if I do have some one in love with me, deuce take her! Only say the word, and I will love you, do anything you want. Here they

are," and he rattled the money in his pocket. "Now we will live a little. Other people enjoy themselves; and I—I do not get any comfort out of you at all, Marianka."

The girl answered nothing, but stood in front of him, and, with quick movement of her fingers, broke her switch into little pieces.

Lukashka suddenly clenched his fists, and set his teeth.

"Yes, it's all wait, wait, wait! As if I did not love you! Do with me what you please," said he suddenly, frowning angrily, and seized her with both hands.

Marianka did not change the quiet expression of her face.

"Do not be so bold, Lukashka; and listen to me," she answered, not pulling away her hands, but pushing the Cossack farther from her.

"You know I am a girl: so listen to me.

It is not for me to consent; my will is not free. But since you love me, here is what I will tell you. You let go of my hands: I will tell you without that. I will get married; but do not expect any follies from me," said Marianka, not turning away her face.

"So you will get married? Married!—that is not in my power. You fall in love yourself, Marianka," said Lukashka suddenly, and from being dark and angry becoming again mild, obedient, and tender, and smiling, and looking closely into her eyes.

Marianka drew near to him, and gave him a kiss on the lips.

"Oh, my dear fellow!" she whispered, pressing him to herself; then, suddenly tearing herself away, she ran off, and, without turning back, entered the gate of her house.

Notwithstanding the prayers of Lukashka

to wait a minute more to hear what he was going to tell her, Marianka did not stop.

"Go away! They will see us!" she said. "There is that wretch of a lodger of ours walking about the yard."

"O cornet's daughter!" thought Lúkashka to himself. "So you are going to get married! You get married if you like; but love me."

He found Nazarka at Yamka's, and, after drinking a while with him, went to Duniashka's, notwithstanding her infidelity.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLENIN was in reality walking about the yard when Marianka came in at the gate, and heard her say, "That wretch of a lodger is walking about."

That whole evening he had passed with Uncle Eroshka in the porch of his new quarters. He had ordered a table to be brought out, the tea-urn, wine, and a lighted candle; and over a glass of tea and a cigar listened to the stories of the old man, who sat at his feet on the steps.

Although the air was still, the candle flickered, and the flame blew about to dif-

ferent sides, now lighting the pillars of the porch, now the table and the tea-service, and now the white shaven head of the old man.

The night-moths flew about, and scattering the dust from their wings, now beat themselves against the table and the glasses, now flew into the flame of the candle, and now disappeared in the dark air outside of the circle of light.

Olenin and Eroshka together drank up five bottles of new wine. Every time that Eroshka filled up the glass he held it up to Olenin, drank his health, and talked without intermission.

He told of the old life of the Cossacks,—of his father, the *broad* one, who alone had carried on his back a boar weighing three hundred and fifty pounds, and had drunk at one sitting two gallons of wine.

He told of his own former life, and of his friend Girtchik, with whom, during the time of the pestilence, he came over from beyond the Terek on little ponies.

He told of hunting, and how, in one morning, he had killed two stags.

He told of his love, who sometimes at night used to run out to the outpost to meet him.

And all this he told so eloquently and so picturesquely, that Olenin did not notice how quickly time passed.

"So, my father," he said, "if you had only found me in my golden time, I would have shown you everything. But now Eroshka has licked the pot. Then Eroshka was the pride of the regiment. Who had the best horses? Who had the finest sabre? Who was always asked to the drinking bouts? Who was the best man to go on a lark with?

Who was sent to the mountains to kill Ahmed Khan? It was always Eroshka. Whom did the girls love? It was always Eroshka. Because I was a real *jigit*. I drank hard; I could steal the horses from the herds in the mountains; I could sing songs; I was good for everything. Now we do not have such Cossacks as I was. It is a pity to look at them. They are only so high;" and Eroshka put his hand about a yard from the ground.

"They wear stupid boots: there is no amusement in looking at them. When they are drunk, they all swell up: yes, and they don't drink like men, they drink like beasts. And what was I? I was Eroshka the clever. They knew me, not only in the villages, but in the mountains. Circassian princes, who were friends of mine, used to come and see me. I was friends with all of them. With

the Tartar I was a Tartar; with the Armenian, an Armenian; with a soldier, a soldier; with an officer, an officer. It was all the same to me, so long as I had something to drink. I used to say to myself, 'You must get clear of this circle of superstition, that you must not drink with a soldier, or eat with a Tartar.'"

"But who says that?" asked Olenin.

"Why, our commanders. Listen to the Tartar Mullah or Cadi. He will tell you, 'You infidel Giaours, why do you eat pork?' That is, everybody keeps his own customs. In my opinion it is all alike. God made everything for man's pleasure. There is no sin in anything. Take, for example, an animal. He lives in the Tartar reeds as well as in ours. Wherever he goes, there he is at home. What God gives him, that he eats. And yet our people say, that, for things like

this, we will lick potsherds; and I say that it is all stupid nonsense," he added, becoming silent.

"What is stupid nonsense?" asked Olenin.

"Why, what our commanders tell us. I had in Tchervlen a Cossack who was an intimate friend of mine. He was a brave fellow, just like me. They killed him in the Tchetchna. He used to say that all these things our commanders made up out of their own heads. You die, he said, and the grass grows on your grave, and that is all there is of it."

The old man laughed. "He was a desperate fellow!"

"But how old are you?" asked Olenin.

"God knows! Seventy, about. When we had an empress, I was already no little fellow. You can count how much that would be. Would it be seventy years?"

"Yes, fully. And still you are strong and hearty."

"Why, thank God! I am well; I am perfectly well: only a witch ruined me a little."

"How?"

"Why, ruined me, spoiled me."

"So, when you die, the grass will grow," repeated Olenin.

Eroshka evidently did not wish clearly to express his idea. He kept silent for a little.

"And what do you think? Drink," he cried, smiling, and offering some wine.

CHAPTER XV.

"AND SO—What was I talking about?" he continued, trying to remember.

"Yes, this is the kind of man I am. I am a hunter; and there is not another hunter in the regiment like me. I can find and show you every kind of animal, and every kind of bird,—what they are and where they are. I know all about them. And I have got dogs, and two guns, and nets, and a mare, and a falcon; got everything, thank God!

"You, perhaps, may be a real hunter, but do not boast of it. I will show you everything. What kind of a man am I? I will find the

scent for you. I know the beast; and I know where he lies down, and where he goes to drink or lie down. I will make a hunting hut, and I will sit there all night, and will keep watch for you.

"What is the use of sitting at home? One only gets warm, and gets drunk. And then the women come and make a row; and the boys cry at you; and one gets angry. While there, at dawn you go out, and you choose a place, and you smooth down the reeds, and you sit there and watch there like a brave young fellow, and wait for them. In any case you know what goes on in the woods.

"Do you look up at the sky? The stars come out; you look at them; you look a long time. You look around? The wood crackles, and you wait for a little noise; and a boar comes out to cover himself with mud.

"You hear how the young eagles cry, and how the cocks or the geese at the village answer them,—geese only until midnight, of course. All that I know.

"And somewhere, away off in the distance, you hear the sound of a gun, and thoughts come. You think, 'Who fired then? A Cossack, just like me, has watched for an animal, and perhaps he has killed it, or perhaps he has only wounded it; and the animal goes angrily into the weeds to wash off the blood, all to no purpose.

"'But I don't like that! I don't like that! What is the use of hurting an animal? Fool!' Perhaps you think, 'A Circassian has killed some stupid Cossack.' All that comes into your head.

"Once, I remember, I sat down at the water-side, and saw a cradle floating along quite whole,—only one side was a little

broken,—and the thought came to me, 'Whose cradle is that?' It must be, I thought, that your demons of soldiers came to a Circassian village, and robbed the Circassian women, and that one of them killed a child, and took him by the feet and threw him into the fire. Do not they do things like that? Those people have no souls.

"When such thoughts came into my head I got sorry. I thought, 'They threw away the cradle, drove away the old woman, and burned up the house; and the bravo who has taken his gun will go over to our side to rob.'

"You see, one must think when one sits there. Yes; and, as you listen, a herd of pigs breaks from the wood, and something knocks inside of you, 'Come on, my dears!' They are smelling about, you think, and you sit without moving a muscle; and your

heart goes 'Thump, thump, thump!' That is the way it moves inside of you.

"This spring just such a big herd came up to me, quite black, in the woods: and I said to myself, 'To Father and Son,' and was just about to fire, when one of the old sows snorted somehow to her pigs, 'Take care, my children, there is a man sitting there;' and they all rushed off into the bushes."

"How did the sow say to her pigs that there was a man sitting there?" asked Olenin.

"What do you think about it? You think that an animal is a fool? No, he is far more cunning than a man: it is great folly to call him a swine. He knows everything. Just take an example.

"A man goes along a track without noticing it. As soon as a pig comes on your track, he immediately smells it out, and runs

off. That means he has got sense in him; that you do not know your own tracks, and he does. Yes; and that is the same as to say that you want to kill him, and he wants to walk alive in the woods. You have such a law, and he has another. He is a pig; and for all that he is no worse than you: he is also a divine creation.

"Eh! man's a fool; man's a fool!" repeated the old man several times, and, letting his head sink down, lost himself in thought.

Olenin also began to think, and going out from the porch, and folding his arms behind his back, silently began to walk about the yard.

When Eroshka roused himself, he raised his head and began carefully to look at the night-moths, which were hovering about the flickering flame of the candle, and were falling into it.

"You fool, you fool!" he said, "where are you flying to? You fool, you fool!"

He got up, and, with his thick fingers began to drive away the moths.

"You will burn up, you fool! come, fly away here. There is plenty of room," he said in a tender voice, trying with his thick fingers carefully to take them up by their wings, and let them go. "You are killing yourself; and I am sorry for you."

He sat there a long time, talking to himself, and drinking out of the bottle; but Olenin continued to walk up and down in the yard.

Suddenly a noise at the gate roused him: involuntarily holding his breath, he listened to the girl's laugh, to the man's voice, and to the sound of the kiss.

Purposely rustling the grass with his feet, he went off to the other side of the yard.

After some time, the fence creaked; a Cossack in a dark uniform and a white cap (that was Lukashka) went along the fence; and a tall woman in white clothes went past Olenin.

"I have nothing to do with you, nor have you anything to do with me," seemed to say to him the decisive stride of Marianka.

He followed her with his eyes to the porch of the family cottage, noticed her, even through the window, as she took off her kerchief, and sat down on the bench.

Suddenly a feeling of loneliness, and of confused wishes and hope, and of a kind of envy, seized upon the soul of the young man.

The last lights were put out in the cottages: the last sounds in the village had died out. The fences and the cattle (which seemed mere white masses in the yard), the

roofs of the houses, and the rows of poplar-trees, all seemed to sleep with a healthy, quiet, tired sleep. Only the incessant croakings of the frogs resounded from the damp distance to the attentive ear.

In the east the stars became fewer; and it seemed as if they were melting in the increasing light: overhead they shone still deeper and more brilliantly.

The old man leaned his head on his arm, and sat listening.

A cock began to crow in the opposite yard.

Olenin was still walking up and down, thinking about something.

The sound of several voices singing came to his ear.

He went to the fence, and began to listen.

The voices of some Cossacks poured out a

merry song; and stronger than all was heard one young voice.

"Do you know who is singing?" said the old man, rousing himself. "That is Lukashka the bravo. He killed a Circassian; he is making merry over it. What is the use of being glad of it?"

"Have you ever killed any people?" asked Olenin.

The old man suddenly rose up on both his elbows, and moved his face nearer to the face of Olenin.

"The devil!" he cried. "Why do you ask? It is no use talking about such things. Is it sensible now, yes, is it sensible now, to ruin a life? Good-bye, father, I have had enough to eat and drink," he said, rising. "Would you like to go hunting to-morrow?"

"Come."

"See that you get up early. If you oversleep, you will be fined."

"I dare say I will get up earlier than you," answered Olenin.

The old man went off. The song died out. Steps were heard, and merry talk.

A little while after, the song was again heard, but farther off; and the deep voice of Eroshka joined the other voices.

"What people! what a life!" thought Olenin, and went alone into his room.

CHAPTER XVI.

UNCLE EROSHKA was a Cossack who was out of active service, and who lived by himself. His wife, twenty years before, had become converted to Orthodoxy, and had run away from him, and married a Russian sergeant. He had no children.

He was not boasting when he said that not long ago he held the first place among the Cossacks of the village. Everybody in the regiment knew him for former bravery. More than one death of Circassians, and even of Russians, was on his soul. He used to go out into the mountains; and he stole from

the Russians, and twice had been in prison.

The greater part of his life had been passed in hunting in the forests, where he lived for days on a bit of dry bread, and drank nothing but water. To make up for that, when he was in the village he was drunk from morning till night.

After coming back from Olenin's, he slept for two hours, and, waking up long before light, lay on his bed, and passed judgment on the man with whom he had got acquainted the night before.

The simplicity of Olenin pleased him greatly,—simplicity in the sense that he did not grudge wine,—and Olenin himself pleased him.

He wondered why the Russians were all simple and rich, and why they all knew nothing, and yet were very learned.

He thought over with himself these questions, and what he might ask Olenin to give him.

The cottage of Uncle Eroshka was tolerably large, and not old; but the absence of a woman was very evident.

Contrary to the usual Cossack character for cleanliness, his whole room was dirty, and in the greatest disorder.

On the table there lay a blood-stained coat, half a buttered roll, and near them a jay for feeding the falcon. On the benches, in disorder, were shoes, a knife, a dagger, a bag, wet clothes, and rags.

In the corner, in a basin of dirty, foul-smelling water, a pair of sandals was soaking: in the corner, too, stood a rifle with its rest. On the floor were thrown a net and several dead pheasants; and round the table wandered a hen, tied by its leg, pecking along the dirty floor.

Near the unheated stove there stood an earthenware pot, filled with some thickened milk; and on the stove itself was perched a hawk, trying to free itself from the cord which held it; while a falcon sat quietly on the edge, looking out of the corners of its eyes at the hen, and from time to time moving its head from right to left.

Uncle Eroshka himself lay on his back on the short bed, which was placed between the wall and the stove, wearing nothing but his shirt; and, resting his strong feet against the stove, was with his thick fingers rubbing his arms, which were greatly scratched by the claws of the falcon; for he was in the habit of carrying it without gloves.

In the whole room, and especially in the neighbourhood of the old man himself, the air was filled with that same strong, not unpleasant, mixed odour which accompanied him everywhere.

"*Uide ma*, uncle?" (i. e. "At home, uncle?") exclaimed a sharp voice outside of the window, which he immediately recognized as that of his neighbour Lukashka.

"*Uide, uide, uide!*" ("At home. Come in!") cried the old man.

"Neighbour Marka, Luka Marka, why have you come to uncle? Are you going back to the outpost?"

The falcon roused itself at the cry of the old man, and fluttered its wings, stretching itself to the end of its leash.

The old man loved Lukashka, and him alone he excluded from his contempt for the whole young generation of Cossacks. Besides this, Lukashka and his mother, as neighbours, not unfrequently gave the old man wine, sour cream, and other things from their household provisions, which Eroshka did not have of his own.

Uncle Eroshka, who had followed nothing but his impulses during his life, always explained his feelings in a practical way.

"Well," he would say to himself, "they are well-to-do people. I will give them some fresh game, and a chicken or two, and they won't forget uncle another time: they will send me a pie or some rolls."

"How are you, Marka? Glad to see you!" merrily cried the old man; and, with a quick movement, he slipped his bare feet out of the bed, jumped up, made two steps along the creaking floor, looked at his crooked legs, and suddenly seemed to be very much amused at them.

He burst into a laugh, stamped his bare heel once, twice, and made the salute.

"Did I do it well?" he asked, twinkling his little eyes.

Lukashka almost burst into a laugh.

"Well, are you going to the outpost?" said the old man.

"I have brought you the wine, uncle, that I promised you."

"God be merciful to you!" said the old man, picking up his trousers and blouse, which lay on the floor.

Putting them on, and girding them about with a strap, he poured some water from the basin on his hands, wiped them on a pair of old trousers, parted his beard with a small piece of comb, and came and stood before Lukashka.

"I am ready," he said.

Lukashka found a dipper, wiped it, filled it, and, sitting down on the bench, handed it to Eroshka.

"Here's to your health! To Father and Son!" said the old man, solemnly accepting the wine. "May you receive everything

you wish! May you be a brave fellow, and get a cross!"

Lukashka also drank his wine with a prayer, and set it down on the table.

The old man got up, brought a dried fish, laid it on the threshold, beat it with a stick so as to make it more tender, and, placing it with his hardened hands on a blue earthenware plate (the only one he had), put it on the table.

"You see, I have got everything, even a bit of something to eat, thank God!" said he proudly. "Well, what about Mosef?"

Lukashka related how the corporal had taken away his gun, evidently wishing to know the old man's opinion.

"But don't bother about your gun," said the old man. "If you don't give him your gun, you won't get the reward."

"How, uncle? They don't give rewards,

they say, to young fellows who are not mounted. And the gun was a good one, a Crimean one, worth eighty roubles."

"Eh, never mind! Once I quarrelled with my captain: he wanted me to give him a horse. 'Give me the horse,' he said, 'and I will have you made a cornet.' I did not give it, and so I never got on."

"Well, uncle, now I have got to buy a horse; and they say, that, beyond the river, you can't get one for less than fifty roubles; and mother has not sold her wine yet."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself so much!" said the old man. "When Uncle Eroshka was your age, he had already carried off herds and horses from the Tartars, and driven them beyond the Terek. They were so plentiful that you had to sell an excellent horse for a gallon of whisky, or for a sheepskin cloak."

"Why did you sell them so cheap?" asked Lukashka.

"Oh, what a fool you are! A fool, Marka!" contemptuously said the old man. "You cannot be stingy with what you have stolen. You, I suppose, have never seen them drive horses? Why don't you answer?"

"What should I say, uncle?" said Lukashka. "It is plain we are not such people as you were.

"You are a fool, you are a fool, Marka! 'Not such people!'" answered the old man, imitating the young Cossack. "I was not that kind of a Cossack at your age."

"Well, what can we do?" asked Lukashka.

The old man contemptuously shook his head.

"Uncle Eroshka was *simple:* he was never stingy about anything. For that reason all Tchetchna were good friends with him. One

of my friends would come to me: I would make him drunk with whisky, talk smooth with him, put him to sleep with me, and when I went to see him I made him a present. That is the way for people to do, and not as they do now. The only amusement the young people have now is to nibble melon-seeds, and then spit out the skins," said Eroshka derisively, moving his lips in imitation of the way in which the present Cossacks nibbled the seeds, and spat out the skins.

"Yes, I know that," said Lukashka; "that is true."

"If you wish to be a bravo then, be a *jigit*, and not a *muzhik*. A *muzhik* will buy a horse, pay down the money, and take the horse away with him."

They were both silent for a while.

"Well, uncle, it is so dull both in the village and at the outpost, I cannot find any

means of amusing myself. Everybody is so timid! Take Nazar, for instance. Not long ago, we were in a Circassian village! and also Ghirei Khan invited us to go among the Nogais for horses: but no one went. I could not go alone."

"And your uncle? Do you think I have dried up? No, I have not dried up? Give me a horse, and I will go to the Nogais at once."

"What is the use of talking nonsense?" said Lukashka. "Tell me how to act with Ghirei Khan. He says, 'Only bring a horse to the Terek, and I will find a place for him.' But you see he is slippery. It is hard to believe him."

"Ghirei Khan you can believe. All his family are excellent people: his father was my true friend. Only listen to your uncle. I don't teach you anything bad. Make him

swear an oath to you, and then you can believe him. And when you go along with him, always have your pistol ready, especially when you begin to divide the horses. Once a Tchetchna man almost killed me because I asked him ten roubles for a horse. Yes, you can believe them, believe them. But never go to sleep without your gun."

Lukashka listened attentively to the old man.

"Well, uncle, people say you have got the bursting-weed," he added, after a moment's silence.

"I have not got the bursting-weed; but I can teach you what to do. Be a good boy, and don't forget what an old man says. Shall I tell you?"

"Tell me, uncle."

"You know a tortoise,—a kind of a devil, you know,—a tortoise?"

"How not know?"

"Well, you find its nest, and make a little wicker-work fence all about it, so that it cannot get there; then it goes all about in a circle, and immediately back again. It will find the bursting-weed, bring it, and the wicker-work all breaks into pieces. You go there quickly on the next morning, and look carefully where the wicker is broken; there the bursting-weed lies. Take that with you, and carry it wherever you wish: for you there will be neither lock nor bolt."

"Did you ever try it, uncle?"

"Perhaps I have tried it; and perhaps I have not: at all events, good people told me about it. I had only one charm. I used to recite 'Hail to you,' when I got on my horse; and nobody could kill me."

"What sort of a 'hail to you,' uncle?"

"And you don't know it? Oh, what

people! You see you have to ask your uncle. Now listen, and say it after me:"—

"Hail to you who live in Zion!
This is your king.
We sit on our horses,
O Sophonius! sing;
O Zachary! speak:
O Father Mandritcha!
Thou who lovest, lovest man."

"Lovest, lovest man," repeated the old man. "Do you know it? Now say it."

Lukashka laughed.

"Why, uncle! you don't mean to say that this kept you from being killed? Yet perhaps—"

"Oh, you have grown wise! You learn it also, and then say it: it will keep you from harm. Now sing 'Mandritcha,' and be all right:" and the old man laughed to himself. "But don't you go to the Nogais, Lukashka, that's what."

"Why?"

"This is not the time, and you are not the people. You Cossacks are good for nothing. What sent the Russians here? They will find fault with it. You had better give it up. Why should you go? Now, when I was with Girtchek,"—and the old man was about to begin one of his endless stories.

Lukashka looked out of the window.

"It is all light, uncle," he interrupted. "Come, it is time to go."

"God preserve you! I am going to that army fellow. I promised to take him hunting: a good fellow, it seems."

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM Eroshka's, Lukashka went home.

As he went out, the raw dewy mist rose from the ground, and covered up the village. Invisible cattle began to move on various sides: cocks crew oftener and more sharply. The air gradually began to get clear; and the people began stirring.

When quite near, Lukashka perceived the fence of his yard quite wet with the mist, the roof of the hut, and the open gate. In the yard there was heard through the mist the noise of a hatchet chopping wood.

Lukashka went into the cottage. His

mother had got up, and, standing before the stove, was putting wood into it. His little sister still slept on the bed.

"Well, Lukashka, have you come on leave?" said his mother quietly. "Where did you spend the night?"

"I was in the village," quietly answered her son, taking his rifle out of its case, and looking at it carefully.

The mother shook her head.

Putting some powder into the pan, Lukashka took down a bag, took out several blank cartridges, and began to load them, ramming down the ball rolled up in a piece of rag; then biting together the ends of his cartridges with his teeth, and inspecting them, he put up the bag.

"Well, mother, I told you to mend the nosebags: have you mended them?" he asked.

"How could I? The dumb one mended something last night. Why, you are not going back to the front now? I have not seen you at all."

"Well, I have just come, and I have got to go," answered Lukashka, tying up his powder. "Where is the dumb one? Is she gone out?"

"She must be chopping wood. She is always lamenting over you. 'I do not see him,' she says, 'I do not see him at all;' and she somehow puts her hands to her face, and chuckles, then on her heart, and wrings her hands, to show that she is sad. Shall I go and call her? She understood everything about the Abrek."

"Call her," said Lukashka. "Yes; and there was some tallow of mine there: bring it here. I want it to grease my sabre."

The old woman went out; and a few

minutes after, with a creaking tread, the dumb sister of Lukashka came into the cottage.

She was six years older than her brother, and would have been exceedingly like him in looks, had it not been for the dull and coarse-featured face, which is common to all deaf-mutes.

She wore a coarse blouse, in large folds. Her feet were bare and scratched; and on her head was an old blue kerchief; her neck, her arms, and her face, were as muscular as a man's. It was evident by her clothing and everything about her, that she constantly performed the hard labour of a man.

She brought in an armful of wood, and threw it on the stove; then she went up to her brother, with a glad smile covering her whole face, patted him on the shoulder, and began with her hands, her face, and her

whole body, to make repeated signs to him.

"Well, well, good, good! You are a good fellow, Stepka," answered her brother, nodding his head. "You have got everything ready; you have mended everything; good fellow! Here's something for you;" and, taking two cakes out of his pocket, he gave them to her.

The face of the dumb girl grew red, and she chirruped with delight. She began still more quickly to make signs, pointing to one side, and bringing her thick fingers again to her eyebrows and face.

Lukashka understood her, and kept on nodding, and slightly smiling.

She meant to say that her brother gave nice things to the girls, and that the girls all liked him; and that some one called Marianka was better than all the rest, and loved him.

She indicated Marianka by pointing quickly in the direction of her yard, to her own eyebrows and face, and chuckling, and nodding her head.

Love she showed by putting her hand to her breast, kissing it, and then embracing something.

The mother returned to the hut, and, seeing what the dumb girl was talking about, smiled, and nodded her head approvingly.

The dumb girl showed her the cakes, and again chuckled with joy.

"I told Ulitka not long ago that I would come to propose for her daughter," said the mother. "She received my word well."

Lukashka silently looked at his mother.

"Well, mother, the wine must be taken to market; and I must have a horse."

"I will take it when the time comes. I will arrange the casks," said the mother,

evidently not wishing that her son should meddle in the household affairs.

"When you go," said the old woman, "take the bag which is in the porch. I got it for you, and have got something ready for you; or will you put it with the saddle-bags?"

"All right," answered Lukashka. "And, if Ghirei Khan comes from over the river, you send him to the outpost; for they won't let me go for a long time. I have got some business with him."

He began to get ready.

"I will send him, Lukashka; I will send him," said the mother.

"You were amusing yourself at Yamka's, weren't you?" asked the old woman. "I got up in the night to see about the cattle, and listened, and was sure I heard your voice singing songs."

Lukashka did not answer.

He went out into the porch, threw the bag over his shoulder, threw his cloak over it, took his gun, and stood on the threshold.

"Good-bye, mother!" he said. "You send a little cask of wine with Nazarka," shutting the gate behind him: "I promised it to the boys there. He will come and get it."

"Lukashka! God be with you! I will send it: I will send it out of the new cask," answered the old woman.

Coming up to the fence, "Listen a bit," she added, leaning forward over the fence.

Lukashka stood still.

"You have been enjoying yourself here—well, thank God! Why should not a young man enjoy himself a little? God gives

happiness. That's all right. But there, my son, look out: do not do such things too much. More than all, keep on good terms with your commander. It is necessary: you cannot do otherwise. I will sell the wine, and get some money for you to buy a horse, and I will get a wife for you too."

"All right, all right!" answered her son, frowning.

The dumb girl cried out in order to call attention to her.

She pointed to her head and her hand, which meant shaven head, or Tchetchna man; then, contracting her brows, she made believe to aim a gun, cried out, and began to chirrup, shaking her head.

She meant that Lukashka should kill another Circassian.

Lukashka understood, laughed, and with

quick, light steps, holding his gun in his cloak, became hidden in the thick mist.

After standing silently at the gate, the old woman turned back to the hut, and immediately began work.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LUKASHKA went back to the outpost; and Uncle Eroshka at the same time whistled to his dogs, and, crawling through the fence, went by the back-streets to the quarters of Olenin; for, when he went hunting, he never liked to meet women.

Olenin was still asleep; and even Vanusha, who had waked up, was looking about him, wondering whether it was time to get up or not, when Uncle Eroshka, with his gun over his shoulder, and in all his hunting-costume, opened the door.

"Get up!" he cried, in his thick voice.

"There is an alarm. The Circassians have attacked the village.—Ivan, get the tea-urn ready for your master. Get up, quick," cried the old man.

"That's how it is here with us, my good fellow. Even the girls have got up. Look out of the window. Look out there: she is going for water, and you are still asleep."

Olenin woke up, and jumped out of bed. He felt so fresh and merry at the sight of the old man and the sound of his voice.

"Sharp, sharp, Vanusha!" he cried.

"This is the way you go hunting! People are breakfasting, and you are asleep.—Lam! where are you going?" he cried to his dog.

"Is your gun ready?" just as if there were a whole crowd of people in the cottage.

"Well, it's my fault: there is nothing to

be done.—Powder, Vanusha, quick. Load it!" said Olenin.

"A fine," said the old man.

"*Duté voulevou?*" said Vanusha, grinning.

"You are not one of our people: you don't talk in our way, you devil!" cried the old man at him, showing the whites of his teeth.

"One is forgiven for the first time," laughed Olenin, putting on his great boots.

"Yes, you can be forgiven for the first time," answered Eroshka; "but the second time you sleep over, I will fine you a gallon of wine. As soon as it begins to get warm you will not find a stag."

"Then, if you do find him, he is wiser than we are," said Olenin, repeating what the old man had said the night before: "you can't deceive him."

"Yes, you laugh at it; you kill him, and then talk. Come along with you. Look, there is the master of the house coming to see you," said Eroshka, looking out of the window. "He has been and dressed up, and put on his new coat, so that you can see that he is an officer. Oh! what people!"

In reality Vanusha came in to say that the master wanted to see him.

"*Largen*," he said mysteriously, as a way of telling his master the meaning of the cornet's visit.

Immediately after that the cornet himself, in a new uniform coat, with officer's shoulder-straps, and in clean boots (a rarity among the Cossacks), with a smile on his face, came rolling into the room, and congratulated him on his arrival.

The cornet, Ilya Vasilievitch, was an *educated* Cossack, who had been in Russia, a

school-teacher, and, more than that, of noble blood.

Knowing this, he wished to appear noble; but involuntarily, under the unnatural polish of adroitness, assurance, and an absurd style of talking, he felt himself to be quite the same as Uncle Eroshka.

This was evident from his sunburnt face, his hands, and his red nose. Olenin asked him to sit down.

"Good-morning, Father Ilya Vasilievitch!" said Uncle Eroshka, standing up, and, as it seemed to Olenin, bowing ironically low.

"How are you, uncle? Are you already here?" answered the cornet, carelessly nodding his head to the old man.

The cornet was a man of about forty, with a little grey, wedge-shaped beard: he was dry, thin, and good-looking, and still very fresh, in spite of his forty years.

On coming into Olenin's quarters, he was evidently afraid lest he should be taken for a common Cossack, and wished to let him feel his importance at once.

"This is our Egyptian Nimrod," he said, with a smile of self-satisfaction, turning to Olenin, and bowing to the old man, "a hunter before the Lord, our first man in everything. Have you already found him out?"

Uncle Eroshka, looking at his feet, which were shod with damp skin sandals, meditatively nodded his head, as though he were astonished at the adroitness and learning of the cornet, and repeated to himself, "Gipshun Nimrod,—what does he mean by that? What will he invent next?"

"Yes; we are going hunting," said Olenin.

"Just so!" remarked the cornet. "And I have a little business affair with you."

"At your service."

"As you are a nobly-born man," began the cornet, "and as I can myself understand, because we also have the grade of officer, and therefore, gradually, we can always treat with each other just as all nobly-born people can do—"

He stopped here, and looked with a smile at the old man and Olenin.

"If you should wish to arrange this, with my consent (for my wife's a stupid woman, of our class, and cannot at present quite understand your words of yesterday), my quarters could be let out for the regimental adjutant, without the stable, for six roubles. And even, as a nobly-born man, I could always get along without letting them at all: therefore, as you wish it, so I, as being also of the rank of officer, could come to an understanding with you about everything. And as

the inhabitants of this region do not have the same usages that we do, and as I should like to keep the proper conditions in every respect—"

"He speaks well and plainly," muttered the old man.

The cornet talked on still more, in the same style.

From all this, Olenin, not without some little trouble, was able to understand the wish of the cornet to receive six roubles a month for his quarters.

He readily agreed to it, and asked his guest if he would take a glass of tea.

The cornet refused.

"According to our stupid custom," he said, "we consider it a sin to use a worldly glass, although, from my education, I could understand doing so; yet my wife, in her human weakness—"

"Well, will you have some tea, then?"

"If you will allow me, I will bring my own glass, my special one," answered the cornet, and went out into the porch.

"Bring me a glass!" he cried loudly.

A few minutes afterwards the door opened; and a sunburnt young hand and arm, in a pink sleeve, appeared through the opening, holding a glass. The cornet went to the door, took the glass, and whispered something to his daughter.

Olenin poured out some tea for the cornet into his *special* glass, and for Eroshka in a *worldly* glass.

"There, I don't wish to keep you," said the cornet, burning his mouth as he hastily attempted to swallow the scalding tea.

"I, indeed, myself am exceedingly fond of fishing; and I am here only for a little while, as it were, for recreation from duty. I also

desire to try my luck, whether some of the gifts of the Terek will not fall to my share. I hope that you will sometimes visit me, and drink a paternal glass, according to the custom of our village," he added.

The cornet bowed, shook Olenin's hand, and went out.

While Olenin was getting ready, he listened to the commanding voice of the cornet, who was giving some orders to his household; and a few minutes afterwards the cornet himself, with his trousers rolled up above his knees, dressed in a ragged coat, with a net on his shoulder, passed by the window.

"Rascal!" said Uncle Eroshka, drinking his tea from the worldly glass. "What! are you really going to pay him six roubles? Was there ever such a thing heard of? Why, they give the best cottage in the village for

two roubles. What a beast! I'd give you my own cottage for three roubles."

"No, I'll stay here now," said Olenin.

"Six roubles! It is evident that you are rolling in money. Eh?" said the old man interrogatively.

"But give us some wine, Ivan."

After eating a little, and drinking a glass of vodka for the journey, Olenin and the old man went out into the street together a little after seven o'clock.

At the gate they met a loaded cart, and a girl covered up to her eyes in a robe of white cloth, like a loose gown thrown over her. She wore shoes, and carried a long switch in her hand.

It was Marianka, who was trying to drag along the oxen by means of a rope tied about their horns.

"Oh, little sister!" said the old man,

making believe that he was going to hug her.

Marianka struck at him with her switch, and looked merrily on both of them with her lovely eyes.

Olenin became still merrier.

"Let us go, let us go!" he said, putting his gun over his shoulder, and feeling happy that Marianka was looking at him.

"Hey, hey!" sounded after him the voice of the girl, which was followed immediately by the creaking of the cart as it began to move.

So long as the road went behind the village along the pastures, Eroshka talked a great deal. He again spoke of the cornet, and constantly scolded at him.

"But why are you so angry with him?" asked Olenin.

"He's so stingy! I don't love such people," answered the old man.

"He will die some time, and it will all remain. For whom does he save it all up? He has built two houses, he has got another garden from his brother; and, as for writing papers, what a dog he is! They come even from the other villages to him to get him to write papers for them. He doesn't stop to think about it: he does it at once, and goes away. For whom is he heaping it up? He has only one little boy and a girl: she will get married, and then there won't be anybody."

"Why, he must be saving it up for her dowry," said Olenin.

"What dowry? The girl will be taken fast enough. She's a nice girl, but he is such an old rascal that he wants to marry her to some rich fellow; he would like himself to get a lot of money for her. Now, there's a Cossack called Luka, a neighbour of mine, and a brave young fellow, who has just killed

a Circassian. He's been wanting to marry her for a long time, but the old man won't give her. First there's one reason, then there's another, then a third. The girl is young, he says. But I know what he's thinking about: he wants people to bow down to him. What nonsense he's making now about this girl! Notwithstanding this, they are all wooing her for Lukashka. He is the first Cossack in the village. He is a bravo, and has killed an Abrek, for which he will get a cross."

"What is all that? When I went into the yard yesterday, I saw the girl kissing a Cossack," said Olenin.

"You're humbugging me!" cried the old man, stopping short.

"I swear 'tis true," said Olenin.

"The woman's a devil," said Eroshka, meditating.

"But what sort of a Cossack was it?"

"I did not see what sort of a looking fellow."

"Well, what kind of a top did he have to his cap? White?"

"Yes."

"And a red coat? Was he about your size?"

"Well, not much bigger."

"Oh! then it is he;" and Eroshka broke into a laugh. "Yes, it is he,—my Marka. That is Lukashka; but I call him my Marka, as a joke. It is the very fellow. Oh, I do love him! I used to be just such another fellow as he, my father. But what's the use of looking after these women?

"Once my love slept with her mother and her sister-in-law; and still they were unable to keep me out. Another time she lived very high up; and her mother was a witch, a very

devil, who hated me fearfully. I came with my friend,—Girtchik, they called him,—well. I came under my love's window, and I climbed upon Girtchik's shoulders. I reached the window, and groped about. She was inside, and was sleeping on a bench. I woke her up all of a sudden. Oh, how she began to scream! She didn't know me, you know.

"Well, what? I couldn't say anything, for the mother was already beginning to wake up. I just took off my coat, and pressed it down upon her face, when she at once knew me,—by the coat, you know. She jumped up. Yes, once I could get anything I wanted. They would give me sour milk, and grapes, and everything," he added, explaining everything in a practical way.

"And she was not the only girl I have been in love with. Oh, no! Then I used to live well."

"And now, what?" said Olenin.

"Now I go along with my dog, and wait in the wood for the pheasants, and then shoot."

"Do you court Marianka for Lukashka?"

"Ah, just look at the dog! See. I'll show you," said the old man, suddenly pointing to his favourite,—Lam.

Both became silent.

After going a hundred yards the old man again stood still, and pointed to a switch which lay across the road.

"What do you think of that?" he said. "What do you think of that? Do you suppose that is nothing? No: that stick lies badly."

"How badly?"

Eroshka burst into a laugh.

"You don't know anything! When a stick lies so, do not step over it, but either

go round it, or put it out of the way, so," thrusting it on one side with his foot; "then say a prayer, 'To Father, Son,' &c., and go on. Then it won't do you any hurt. That is what the old people taught me."

"What folly!" said Olenin. "You'd better tell me about Marianka. Does she go about with Lukashka?"

"Hush, now be quiet!" interrupted the old man again, in a whisper. "Only listen! Let us go through the wood here."

The old man, stepping lightly and silently in his sandals, went in front, along the narrow path which led into the thick forest, pushing aside the wild undergrowth as he made his way.

Sometimes he would look back with a frown at Olenin, who rustled the bushes, and, treading heavily with his big military boots, was carelessly carrying his gun, and occa-

sionally caught it on the twigs, which, in different places, stretched across the path.

"Don't make a noise; go quietly, soldier!" said Eroshka to him in an angry whisper.

One could feel by the air that the sun had risen. The mist, although fast disappearing, still covered the tops of the trees, making the forest seem immensely high; and at every step forward the scene changed, whilst what at first appeared to be a tree in the distance turned out to be merely a bush, and a reed looked as high as a sapling.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE mist partly rose, bringing to view the damp reed roofs of the distant village, the moist atmosphere covering the road and the grass along the fences with dew-drops.

The smoke was everywhere curling from the chimneys of the houses; and the people were leaving the village in all directions, some going to work, others to the river, and others to the outpost.

The sportsmen went along the damp path overgrown with weeds and grass; while their dogs, joyfully wagging their tails as now and

again they looked at their masters, trotted alongside.

Myriads of gnats danced up and down in the air, following the sportsmen, and alighting upon their shoulders and their hands, and flying into their eyes. There was an odour of vegetation and of the dampness of the forest.

Olenin constantly looked back at the cart in which Marianka was sitting, switching her oxen.

All around was very quiet. The various cries and noises which had been before heard coming up from the village no longer fell upon the ears of the sportsmen: no sound was heard except that made by the dogs as they scrambled through the brambles, or the occasional notes of birds calling to each other.

Olenin knew that it was dangerous in the

forest, as the Abreks always concealed themselves in such places; but he knew also, that, for a man on foot in the forest, his gun was a strong defence.

It was not that he felt frightened; but he felt that another person in his place might feel frightened. And looking ahead into the damp and misty forest, listening with a special effort to the few and feeble sounds, he seized hold of his gun, and experienced, for him, a new and pleasant sensation.

Uncle Eroshka, going ahead at every place where there were visible traces of some animal, stood still, and, looking attentively at them, pointed them out to Olenin. He said but little, making from time to time only some observation in a whisper.

The road along which they went had, some time or other, been travelled over by a cart; but it had long ago been overgrown with grass.

The elms and plane-trees on each side were so thickly planted, and were covered with such luxuriant foliage, that nothing could be seen through them; and almost every tree was clothed from top to bottom with wild vines and other creepers.

Below, the brambles grew in profusion; every little opening between the bushes was partly closed by brambles and by reeds, with their grey nodding plumes.

In places there were large tracks which had been made by wild animals; and small tracks of pheasants, here and there, led into the thick wood from the road.

The vegetation of this wood, which had never been traversed by cattle, surprised Olenin at every step, as he had never seen anything similar to it.

This forest, the danger, the old man with his mysterious conduct, Marianka with her

shapely build, and the mountains,—all this seemed to Olenin like a dream.

"I have got a pheasant," whispered the old man, looking intently ahead, and pulling his cap down over his face.

"Cover your face! A pheasant!" And he angrily motioned to Olenin, while he crawled onwards upon all-fours. "A pheasant doesn't love a man's face."

Olenin was still behind, when the old man stopped and began to look up into a tree.

A cock-pheasant was screaming from the tree at the dogs, which were barking at it; and Olenin suddenly got sight of it. At the same time he heard a shot, as if from a cannon, from the heavy fowling-piece of Eroshka. The bird started to fly away; but as it spread its wings, it fell heavily to the ground.

Walking towards the old man, Olenin

started another bird, and quickly raising his gun, took aim, and fired.

The pheasant flew straight up, and then, like a stone rustling through the branches, fell into the wood.

"Splendid!" cried the old man, laughing. He could not himself hit a bird upon the wing.

Picking up the pheasants, they went on farther; and Olenin, excited by the exercise, and by the praise of the old man, continually talked to him.

"Stop! Let us go here," Eroshka interrupted him. "Yesterday I saw the trace of a deer here."

Turning into the wood, and going about three hundred yards, they came to an opening overgrown with reeds, and partially covered with water.

Olenin kept at some distance from the old

man; and Uncle Eroshka went twenty paces before him, bent down, and significantly nodded, and beckoned with his hand.

Going up to him, Olenin saw the track of human feet, to which the old man was drawing his attention.

"Do you see?"

"I see. Well, what of it?" Trying to speak as calmly as possible, "It is the track of a man."

Then involuntarily came into his head thoughts about Cooper's "Path-finders," and about the Abreks; and looking at the mysterious manner in which the old man went on, he could not decide to ask him; and so he was in doubt whether the danger or the sport made this mysteriousness necessary.

"Yes, that's my track," simply answered the old man, pointing to the grass, on which was scarcely visible the track of an animal.

The old man went on farther. Olenin kept up to him now.

Going on a few steps they came to a split pear-tree, under which the ground was black, and where they saw the fresh droppings of an animal.

The place was so overgrown with vines as to be like a covered and comfortable arbour, dark and cool.

"It must have been here this morning," said the old man. "You see it is quite fresh."

Suddenly a fearful rustling was heard in the woods ten paces from them.

Both started and seized their guns; but nothing was visible, though they plainly heard how the reeds were being broken.

The measured, quick beat of a gallop was heard for an instant: the rustling turned to a dull noise, sounding still farther and farther away in the quiet of the wood.

Something seemed to break loose in the heart of Olenin. He anxiously looked into the green wood, and at last looked at the old man.

Uncle Eroshka, with his gun against his breast, stood immovable. His cap was thrown back; his eyes burned with an unusual fire; and his mouth, from which his yellow teeth stood out in a malicious way, remained fixedly open.

"A stag!" he said, and, despairingly throwing his gun on the ground in front of him, began to pull his grey beard.

"It stood there; and we ought to have gone by the road. Fool! fool!" and he angrily pulled his beard.

"Fool! pig!" he affirmed again, pulling his beard.

Something seemed to fly over the forest, in the mist; and still farther and farther away resounded the tread of the deer.

It was already twilight when Olenin returned with the old man, tired, hungry, and strong.

Dinner was ready. He ate, drank with the old man, so that he began to feel warm and merry, and went out into the porch.

Again the mountains in the sunset rose before his eyes; again the old man told him his unending stories of hunting, of Abreks, of girls, and of his careless, wild life.

Again the beauty Marianka came out, went in, and passed through the yard. Through her dress he noticed more than ever the beautiful, virginal form of the girl.

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